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ABSTRACT

Three studies are presented, each of which is a comparison of the acquisition of an aspect of the French verb system by three groups of speakers. The speakers are: young Anglophones learning French as a second language in an early French immersion program in Montreal; young monolingual Francophones attending elementary French language schools in Quebec; and young bilingual Francophones enrolled in elementary French language schools in Ontario. The three aspects of the French verb system under study are the syntax of the bare (i.e., prepositionless) infinitival complement of motion verbs, the morphology of the pronominal verbs (i.e., reflexive pronoun plus verb), and the morphology of the past participles (i.e., stem plus affix). Each study presents and attempts to explain the language acquisition errors committed by the three speaker groups as well as the differences in the language acquisition stages reached by the three speaker groups. (Author/MSE)

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ASPECTS OF THE ACQUISITION OF THE FRENCH VERB SYSTEM BY YOUNG SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH AND FRENCH IN QUEBEC AND ONTARIO

Edouard Beniak

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RESUME

Ce mémoire comporte trois études dont chacune consiste en une comparaison de l'acquisition d'un aspect du système verbal du français par trois groupes de locuteurs différents. Les locuteurs sont des jeunes anglophones qui apprennent le français comme deuxième langue dans un programme d'immersion hâtive au Québec, des jeunes francophones unilingues inscrits dans des écoles élémentaires de langue française au Québec et des jeunes francophones bilingues inscrits dans des écoles de langue française en Ontario. Les trois aspects du système verbal du français à l'étude sont la syntaxe de l'infinitif pur (i.e., sans préposition) après les verbes de mouvement, la morphologie des verbes pronominaux (i.e., pronom réfléchi + verbe) et la morphologie des participes passés (i.e., thème + désinence). Chaque étude présente et tente d'expliquer les erreurs d'apprentissage commises par les trois groupes de locuteurs ainsi que les différences qu'il y a entre eux par rapport aux stades d'acquisition qu'ils ont atteints.

ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of three studies each one of which is a comparison of the acquisition of an aspect of the French verb system by three different groups of speakers. The speakers are young Anglophones learning French as a second language in an early French immersion program in Montreal, young monolingual Francophones attending elementary French language schools in Quebec and young bilingual Francophones enrolled in elementary French language schools in Ontario. The three aspects of the French verb system under study are the syntax of the bare (i.e., prepositionless) infinitival complement of motion verbs, the morphology of the pronominal verbs (i.e., reflexive pronoun + verb) and the morphology of the past participles (i.e., stem + affix). Each study presents and attempts to explain the language acquisition errors committed by the three speaker groups as well as the differences in the language acquisition stages reached by the three speaker groups.

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0. INTRODUCTION

This thesis belongs to the areas of both first and second language acquisition. It compares the acquisition of several aspects of the French verb system by three groups of young speakers differing in terms of whether they are monolingual or bilingual and, as concerns the latter group, in terms of whether their mother tongue is French, English or both. One group of speakers is composed of monolingual French Quebeckers. Another is composed of bilingual Franco-Ontarians many of whom have learned French and English more or less simultaneously (due to the fact that French is a minority language in Ontario and especially in the localities from which the Franco-Ontarian students are drawn, as we shall see). The third group of speakers is composed of bilingual Anglo-Quebeckers who have learned French as a second language in an early French immersion program. The aspects of the French verb system whose acquisition is being compared across these three speaker groups are the syntax of the bare (i.e., prepositionless) infinitive of motion verbs, the morphology of pronominal verbs (i.e., reflexive pronoun + verb) and the morphology of past participles (i.e., stem + inflection). These aspects will be examined in separate sections (sections 2, 3 and 4) the aim of each one of which will be to compare and explain the language acquisition errors committed by the three speaker groups on the one hand, and the language acquisition stages reached by the three groups on the other. Preceding these three sections is a methodological section (section 1) in which the French immersion, Franco-Ontarian and Québécois corpora that have provided the data base for the acquisition studies featured in this thesis are described. In the conclusion (section 5) the main findings that will have emerged from each acquisition study are summarized and then some of these findings are discussed as they suggest directions for future research, bear on theoretical issues within the language acquisition field, or allow conclusions to be drawn concerning spoken French development in early French immersion programs and in French language schools serving Francophones residing in Ontario's minority francophone localities.

The remainder of the introduction is intended to provide useful background information to the acquisition studies presented later in the thesis. Specifically, I would like to provide a description of the development of French immersion education in Canada, familiarize the reader with the plight of the French language in Ontario and then contrast the latter situation with the "healthiness" of the French language in the province of Quebec.

0.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH IMMERSION EDUCATION

As Swain (1980:3) has pointed out, "It is probably the case that most major changes in an educational system derive from pressures external to it. The development of French immersion programs in Canada is no exception". French immersion education arose as an innovative approach to the teaching of French as a second language to Canadian anglophone students. French immersion education began in the mid-sixties in St. Lambert, a suburb on Montreal's south shore. The educational problem behind the rise of French immersion education was parental discontent over the lack of success of the conventional French program available in the suburb's English language schools. The parents were concerned that the short daily French periods offered in the traditional program were not sufficient to guarantee the attainment of functional bilingualism by their children. The parents rightly felt that such a level of proficiency in Canada's other official language could confer important political, economic, social and cultural advantages to their children in a province in the aftermath of its Quiet Revolution, i.e., increasingly intent on preserving its French identity and on promoting French as the working language. The concerned parents were able to exert sufficient pressure on the local school board to have it set up, on an experimental basis, a new form of French language instruction of their own conception: immersion.

French immersion education is innovative in that it involves a home/school language switch. French is the sole medium of instruction during the early grades (i.e., Kindergarten to grade 2 or 3). Thereafter an English language arts class is introduced into the curriculum and certain content subjects like mathematics are also taught in English, others continuing to be taught in French. By grade 6 the immersion students are

receiving approximately equal instruction time in the two languages. French immersion education thus differs in two important respects from the traditional form of French language instruction. On the one hand immersion vastly increases the degree of exposure to and opportunity of the students to use French. On the other it makes French the medium of instruction. The learning of French in immersion is therefore a *sine qua non* exigency for the learning of the content subjects taught via that language. These important characteristics have prompted certain investigators like Stern (1978) to view the acquisition of French in immersion as 'incidental' to its use in learning the content subjects or Harley and Swain (1978:35) to state that "the early French immersion classroom provides a setting for second language acquisition that resembles a natural acquisition setting in some important respects". This is not to say, however, that French is never the object of instruction (see Swain 1980). During the early immersion grades emphasis is placed on developing comprehension skills through the learning of basic vocabulary. The immersion teachers are normally bilingual and so there is no pressure on the students to produce French utterances straight from the outset. On the contrary the students are allowed to proceed at their own pace. Only when the students have internalized enough vocabulary are they encouraged to speak French. These early years are a very crucial part of the immersion experiment. In fact the success of French immersion hinges on the receptive skills developed by the students as these are the skills they must rely on to learn the content subjects that are taught in French.

While there was probably never any doubt that French immersion would significantly improve the students' command of French, it was far from obvious at the time of the original St. Lambert experiment that it would prove to be an acceptable alternative to traditional English instruction. Right from the start it was a calculated risk. The St. Lambert parents wanted empirical proof that the second language benefits would not be achieved at the expense of mother tongue development nor of content subject mastery. Thus a whole evaluation program had to be implemented to assess both the French and English language skills of the students as well as their performance in the content subjects. To this end a team of psycholinguists from McGill University headed by Dr. W.E. Lambert were invited to conceive

and carry out the program evaluation. As is well known, the evaluation results dismissed any fears that the parents might have had and are reported in a book by Lambert and Tucker (1972). Given the reported success of the St. Lambert endeavor, French immersion programs have since spread to school boards in most of the other Canadian provinces. This spread was no doubt also aided in part by Prime Minister Trudeau's policy of national bilingualism (see Bruck and Swain 1976). The main findings of well over two hundred and fifty studies on French immersion education in Canada are summarized in a recent bibliography compiled by Massey and Potter (1979). Using a wide assortment of testing techniques these studies have invariably confirmed the positive findings that came out of the St. Lambert evaluation. They all show that English-speaking students going through French immersion programs attain higher French language skills than comparable students in regular French programs and moreover that such benefits are not achieved to the detriment of English language skills and content subject mastery[1]. However, the immersion students fall short of achieving native proficiency in French at the end of the early immersion program. By the end of grade 6 their receptive skills (i.e., reading and listening) are native-like but their productive skills (i.e., writing and speaking) are not (Spilka 1976; Swain 1978). This thesis will provide more information on the immersion students' spoken French development. While increased teacher correction and contact with native French-speaking peers would certainly help improve the spoken French of the immersion students (Swain 1974), Genesee (1978) reports findings which indicate that the early French immersion students in Montreal are not more active in seeking opportunities to speak French outside the school than students attending regular French classes. Genesee attributes these results among other factors to the immersion students' instrumental rather than integrative motivation for learning to speak French. That the early French immersion experience does not seem to be conducive to active use of French in the extrascholastic environment is probably all the more disheartening to supporters of immersion education as, paradoxically, immersion students have been found to show an increased desire to use French outside the school (Genesee 1978) and 'feel' closer to French-Canadians as a result of their immersion experience (Cziko, Lambert and Gutter 1979).

0.2 THE PLIGHT OF FRENCH IN ONTARIO

The Franco-Ontarian population is composed to a very large degree of people of Québécois origin. There has been a more or less continuous emigration of French-Quebeckers to Ontario (see Mougeon, Beniak and Côté 1981). Nevertheless French remains a minority language in Ontario. According to the 1976 national census there were 462,190 people of French mother tongue[2] in Ontario compared to 6,457,645 of English mother tongue[3]. These figures show that Francophones make up between 6 and 7% of the provincial population only. On the local level, however, there is a wide range of variation in the proportion of Francophones to Anglophones. For example, in Hawkesbury (South Eastern Ontario) 84% of the population is francophone. In Cochrane (Northern Ontario) one finds an intermediary level of francophone concentration (43%). In Windsor (South Western Ontario) the level of francophone concentration is only 6%. Because it constitutes such a small minority and because it does not control Ontario's economy, the Franco-Ontarian population is undergoing linguistic assimilation into the Anglo-Ontarian majority language group. But as Mougeon and Canale (1977:3) have argued, "it seems reasonable to assume that in communities where two language groups coexist, the overall level of exposure of one language group to the other's language will be a function of each group's demographic strength. In other words, as the size of one group increases with respect to the size of the other, so does the level of exposure of that other group to the dominant group's language". Thus we expect linguistic assimilation to be more advanced in localities, districts or regions where Ontario's Francophones are numerically inferior to Anglophones than in localities, districts or regions where the reverse relationship holds. The following bears out these predictions.

If we go back to the 1971 national census[4] it is possible to calculate the rate of abandonment of French at home among Ontarians of French origin. In 1971 there were 737,360 Ontarians of French extraction but only 352,465 among these reported still using French as the dominant language of communication at home. These figures translate into a 52% rate of replacement of French by English as the primary language of communication in Franco-Ontarian homes[5]. However, Joy (1978) broke down the provincial rate by district and found that it varied considerably depending on the level

of francophone concentration in each district. For example, in the few districts where Francophones form a strong majority (i.e., more than 80% of the district population), the rate of shift to English in the home was less than 20%. But in districts where Francophones account for less than 20% of the population, the rate of shift to English was more than 80%. Several sociolinguistic surveys carried out at the local level by the Franco-Ontarian Centre (Mougeon and Hébrard 1975 and Mougeon et al. 1980, notably) have revealed the same relationship between rate of shift to English in Franco-Ontarian homes and level of francophone concentration.

It follows from the above that many Franco-Ontarian children residing in localities where Francophones are outnumbered by Anglophones are getting greater exposure to English than to French at home. Since it has been repeatedly observed in minority language situations that the home is the last domain to be penetrated by the majority language,[6] one can infer from this that the Franco-Ontarian child who has not been handed down French by his parents will not be able to acquire French outside the home (i.e., in the community) in localities where Francophones are in the minority. If the minority language has not or has only incompletely been transmitted from the parents to the child, the French language school represents a last resort. In this connection, the belief that "French language maintenance is the responsibility of the French school" is not uncommon among Franco-Ontarian parents who have failed to transmit the French language to their children (Mougeon and Canale 1977:6). This brings up the important question of the impact of French language schooling on French language maintenance in Ontario's minority francophone localities. Since the Franco-Ontarian students whose spoken French is under examination in this thesis hail from precisely such localities, this thesis will provide evidence bearing on the above question.

In comparison, French language maintenance in Ontario's majority francophone localities is much stronger. As reported earlier, in such localities French remains the dominant language of communication in more than 80% of the Franco-Ontarian households. It is safe to assume that in such localities French also remains the dominant language of communication in the

community given the numerical preponderance of Francophones over Anglophones. Thus in majority francophone localities the French school caters to students who probably for the most part have already had French passed on to them at home.

0.3 THE SITUATION OF FRENCH IN QUEBEC

According to the 1971 national census figures reported in Gendron (1976), 79% of the population of Quebec was of French ethnic origin (4,759,000), 80.7% had French as their mother tongue (4,867,000) and 80.8% used French as the main language of communication at home (4,870,000). These figures show that, unlike Ontario, Quebec is a province with a strong francophone majority whose allegiance to French is extremely high since the proportion of Quebeckers who used French as the principal home language was actually slightly greater than the proportion of Quebeckers of French mother tongue, which in turn was slightly greater than the proportion of Quebeckers of French ethnic origin. The level of nonallegiance to French as the main language of communication in the home among Quebeckers of French mother tongue or French ethnic origin was at worst 2% in 1971. This is the maximum percentage that one obtains under the assumption that the higher proportion of Quebeckers whose main home language was English (14.7% of the population or 388,000 people) than Quebeckers whose mother tongue was English (13.1% of the population or 789,000 people) was entirely due to the assimilation of Quebeckers of French ethnic origin into the anglophone minority (because of the then and still considerable economic attraction power of the anglophone minority). In short, as of 1971 the francophone population of the province of Quebec was not undergoing any appreciable amount of linguistic assimilation. The important transformations that have since taken place in Québécois politics, in particular in the area of French language legislation, make it plausible to suppose that the maximum percentage of nonallegiance to French as the principal home language among Quebeckers of French mother tongue or French ethnic origin, as revealed by the 1981 national census results, will have dropped below 2%. According to Gendron (1976), 86% of Francophones in Quebec live to all intents and purposes only in French. Thus Quebec can be compared to a quasi-monolingual speech community. It is in the work domain

that recourse to English has been the most noticeable among French-Quebeckers (Gendron 1976) but this situation is likely to change given the compulsory francization programs implemented by the Quebec government.

0.4 CONCLUSION

There are obvious differences in the degree of exposure to and opportunity to use French between the three speaker populations from which the students in this thesis are drawn. The French immersion students, exposure to and use of French begins in the immersion school and is to all intents and purposes restricted to the school domain since, as was reported, they have little or no contact with French-speaking peers outside of the school. It was seen that the minority locality Franco-Ontarian students' exposure to and use of French begins at home, but very often with simultaneous and even greater exposure to and use of English, is at best weakly reinforced by the community given the numerical preponderance of Anglophones over Francophones, and continues in the French language schools. It was mentioned finally that the province of Quebec is analogous to a monolingual speech community, which means that the Québécois students' exposure to and use of French begins at home, with little or no simultaneous exposure to and use of English, and is strongly reinforced by both the community and the French school. In view of these intergroup differences in degree of exposure to and opportunity to use French, we should not be surprised if the three aspects of the French verb system under investigation are not acquired to the same extent by each student group.

1. THE CORPORA

1.1 THE IMMERSION CORPUS

The French immersion corpus is composed of tape-recorded interviews that I conducted with a total of 75 English-speaking students enrolled in an early French immersion program offered by the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal[7]. The interviews took place in the spring of 1977. Each student was interviewed individually for about 15 to 20 minutes in a room set aside for this purpose. The interview consisted of a series of questions on the students' holiday experiences, their current daily activities, their holiday plans for the future and their family life. The students were selected at random from one class at each of the following grade levels: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. An equal number of students (i.e., 15) was chosen from each class. The random selection yielded an approximately equal representation of males and females at each grade level. Practically all of the students hailed from professional or middle class backgrounds. All of the students came from the same school. Being a native speaker of French, I was able to transcribe the tape-recorded interviews myself.

1.2 THE FRANCO-ONTARIAN CORPUS

The Franco-Ontarian corpus is composed of tape-recorded interviews that were conducted by members of the Franco-Ontarian Centre with a total of 108 grades 2 and 5 students residing in six localities where Anglophones outnumber Francophones: Cornwall (39% Francophones), Sudbury (29%), North Bay (17%), Welland (17%), Pembroke (10%) and Windsor (6%). The interviews were carried out in the context of two separate sociolinguistic surveys. The first survey dates back to 1974. It was undertaken in Sudbury and Welland with francophone students at both the elementary and high school levels. This initial survey was undertaken in response to the recommendations of the Franco-Ontarian Centre's Advisory Committee in 1973. The aim of the survey was to gather linguistic data that would serve as the basis for evaluating the Sudbury and Welland students' competence in spoken as well as written French. For the purposes of the present thesis, I have drawn on the tape-recorded interviews that were carried out at the elementary level, i.e., in grades 2 and 5.

In both localities seven students were interviewed in grade 2 and seven in grade 5 for a total of 28 students. The students were not chosen at random but rather in such a way as to yield an approximately equal representation of males and females and of working, middle and professional class backgrounds. Social class backgrounds were determined on the basis of parental occupations. The interviews consisted of a series of questions on such topics as the students' leisure activities, school and home life, personal experiences, etc. All interviews were then transcribed and checked for accuracy of transcription. In addition, the interviews included questions on the students' frequency of use of French vs. English with their parents and siblings and on their parents' frequency of use of French vs. English with them. The information gathered via these language use questions was used to determine the students' dominant language of communication. The reader is referred to Mougeon (1981) for further details on the Sudbury and Welland sociolinguistic survey.

The second survey was undertaken in 1978 as part of a large research project funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education, the purpose of which was to gather information on the language use patterns of Franco-Ontarian students residing in francophone minority localities and on these students' oral French proficiency. The survey was undertaken, among other minority francophone localities, in the four that make up the remainder of my Franco-Ontarian corpus, i.e., Cornwall, North Bay, Pembroke and Windsor. Again, students were surveyed at both the elementary and secondary school levels but I have made use only of the tape-recorded interviews that were conducted at the elementary level, i.e., in grades 2 and 5. In the four localities mentioned above 10 students were interviewed in grade 2 and 10 in grade 5 for a total of 80. These students were selected in numbers that were proportionately representative of the larger student population at each grade level as concerns social class and language dominance. Social class was arrived at on the basis of parental occupations. Language dominance was also arrived at in the same way as in the 1974 survey. The interview schedule was a slightly expanded version of the one employed in the 1974 survey so as to cover a greater variety of topics of potential interest to the students. The reader may wish to consult Mougeon et al. (1980) for more detailed information on the 1978 survey.

1.3 THE QUEBECOIS CORPUS

The Québécois corpus is actually composed of two subcorpora. One subcorpus is made up of tape-recorded interviews that I conducted with 15 francophone students attending a private French language school in Montreal.[8] These interviews were carried out during the same period (i.e., spring 1977) as the ones with the French immersion students and consisted of the same set of questions that were asked the immersion students (see earlier description of the questions). Three francophone students were randomly selected from one class at each of the grade levels at which the immersion students were chosen (i.e., 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6). Care was taken to ascertain that the students' sole or at least principal source of exposure to English was the school's English language class. One student who did not meet this requirement was replaced by another randomly selected student who did. The francophone students can therefore be said to be essentially monolingual. The great majority were from middle or professional class backgrounds as was the case for the immersion students. Social class was inferred on the basis of the immersion and francophone students' answers to the question on their family lives as this question elicited information on the occupations of their parents. The reason behind the constitution of this Québécois subcorpus was my concern that I should have a realistic gauge for assessing the immersion students' acquisition of French.

The other Québécois subcorpus consists of tape-recorded interviews with a total of 14 grades 2 and 5 francophone students attending a French language school in Quebec City. The interviews were conducted by members of the Franco-Ontarian Centre as part of yet another sociolinguistic survey of Ontarian French undertaken in 1976. The goal of the survey was to complement the linguistic data that had been gathered in the 1974 survey that was carried out in the minority francophone localities of Welland and Sudbury with linguistic data obtained from Franco-Ontarian students residing in majority francophone localities, in this case Rayside and Hawkesbury. Furthermore, linguistic data were also obtained from monolingual francophone students residing in Quebec City for comparative purposes. In all 28 students were interviewed at the primary and high school levels, among them the seven grade 2 and seven grade 5 students whose recorded speech I have relied on to

form my other Québécois subcorpus. The interview schedule was identical to the one that was used in the 1974 survey and the Quebec City student sample was stratified in the same manner as the Welland and Sudbury student samples (i.e., as a function of sex and social class with a view to ensuring an approximately even distribution of males and females and of working, middle and professional class backgrounds). However, the language use questions were struck from the interview schedule as the Quebec City students were to all intents and purposes essentially monolingual, like their Montreal counterparts. More information on the 1976 sociolinguistic survey carried out by the Franco-Ontarian Centre can be found in Mougeon et al. (1977) and in Mougeon (1981).[9]

2. ACQUISITION OF THE BARE INFINITIVE AFTER MOTION VERBS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This first study bears on two infinitival constructions that can be used after motion verbs such as *aller*, *venir*, *partir*, etc. in French. One construction is not introduced by a preposition and thus I shall call it the 'bare' infinitive or simply the BI (1a). The other is introduced by the preposition *pour* and hence I shall refer to it as the *pour* infinitive or simply the PI (1b).

(1) a. Le plombier est venu réparer le robinet.
b. Le plombier est venu pour réparer le robinet.

. The study is divided into three parts. In the first part I shall present arguments which do not support the traditional claim that the BI and the PI are both purpose constructions. The arguments suggest that the BI is not purposive but rather factive, a term to be defined later. In the second part of the study I shall broach the problem of the semantics of the motion verbs. I will show that there are two types of motion verbs, general and specific ones, and reveal the existence of a syntactic constraint on the use of the PI with general motion verbs. In the third and main part of this study I will attempt to explain a tendency on the part of the Franco-Ontarian students to use what would seem to be the PI at the expense of the BI and see whether the Québécois and French immersion students do likewise.

2.2 THE BI AND PI

To the best of my knowledge, the BI and the PI have simply been assumed rather than demonstrated to both signal purpose. The problem is not in connection with the PI as this construction obviously is purposive given the presence of the purposive preposition *pour*. The problem is in connection with the BI because it lacks an overt marker of purpose. Here are some characteristic statements that have been made by traditional grammarians concerning the BI:

> ... les verbes de mouvement peuvent être suivis d'un infinitif, construit directement... qui a un sens final. (Chevalier et al. 1964:153)

> Le rapport de finalité... peut être exprimé par un infinitif précédé de *pour*... ou par un infinitif pur après les verbes de mouvement. (Grevisse 1975: 1173)

> Après un verbe de mouvement, l'infinitif sans préposition marque le but. (Gaiffe et al. 1936:114)

There are several reasons why I think the above statements are in error.

Following Lakoff (1968) we will say that a verbal construction indicates purpose if it can be used in answer to the question word *pourquoi*. The examples below show that the PI, as expected, has the desired property but that the BI doesn't:[10]

(2) a. Pourquoi grand-mère est-elle montée ?
b. Pour se coucher.
c. *Se coucher.

(3) a. Pourqoui Jean est-il parti à la gare ?
b. Pour y chercher des amis.
c. *Y chercher des amis.

According to Lakoff's criterion, then, the BI cannot be said to signal purpose. It remains therefore for us to determine what in effect the BI does signal. If we continue to reason à la Lakoff, we see that the BI can be used in answer to the interrogative expression *qu'est-ce que...faire*, whereas the PI cannot:

(4) a. Qu'est-ce que la bonne descend faire ?
b. Laver du linge.
c. *Pour laver du linge.

(5) a. Qu'est-ce que Paul ira faire ?
b. Voir un film.
c. *Pour voir un film.

(6) a. Qu'est-ce que le plombier est venu faire ?
b. Réparer le robinet.
c. *Pour réparer le robinet.

What the above examples show is that the BI denotes a fact (in the past) or an action whose realisation is presupposed (in the future). Thus in (4) it is presupposed that the maid is going to wash the laundry and in (5) it is presupposed that Paul will see a movie. That the plumber fixed the faucet is a fact in (6). For convenience of exposition, I will coin the term 'factive' to designate verbal constructions which can be used in answer to the 'factive' question *qu'est-ce que...faire*. According to this criterion, then, the BI is a factive construction.

In support of the factive interpretation of the BI we can mention McArthur's (1971) study of French verbal constructions in which he analyses the BI as the equivalent of a finite conjoined sentence as illustrated below:

(7) a. Le plombier est venu réparer le robinet.
b. Le plombier est venu et a réparé le robinet.

(8) a. Elle alla frapper à la porte.
b. Elle alla et frappa à la porte.

What paraphrases (7b) and (8b) render explicit is precisely the realization of the action denoted by the BI. In contrast to the BI, the PI is only amenable to paraphrases where the preposition *pour* is replaced by an equivalent purpose marker:

(9) a. Le plombier est venu pour réparer le robinet.
b. Le plombier est venu afin de/dans le but de/dans l'intention de/etc. réparer le robinet.

Since the PI only indicates an action which is intented as opposed to an action which is a fact or presupposed, we have the following distinction:

(10) a. *Le plombier est venu réparer le robinet, mais il ne l'a pas réparé.
b. Le plombier est venu pour réparer le robinet, mais il ne l'a pas réparé.

To conclude this section, I have provided arguments which I think cast some serious doubt on the putative synonymy of the BI and PI. It would seem to be the case that the BI is not a purpose construction but rather a factive one, that is, a construction which presents an action as a fact of the past or as a fact of the future. There is a not uninteresting consequence of the factive analysis of the BI, which is that motion verbs are really like any other verbs in French as they too require the preposition *pour* before the infinitive in ordre to signal purpose.

2.3 MOTION VERBS[11]

Verbs of motion in French belong to one of either two categories: general or specific. The general verbs of motion are those which simply convey the idea of motion with no particular destination implied. *Aller*, its colloquial variant *avoir été* and *retourner* (i.e.,aller de nouveau) are general verbs of motion. Specific verbs of motion indicate more than just motion. They also implicitly provide information on the destination of the motion. All the other verbs of motion are specific. For example, *sortir* means *aller dehors*, *monter* means *aller en haut*, *descendre* means *aller en bas*, *entrer* means *aller dedans*, etc. In fact, as the meaning equivalents show, specific motion verbs can be broken down semantically into a general motion verb plus an adverbial of location. Because of their semantic composition, specific motion verbs need not be used with an overt locative complement in order to form a grammatical sentence, but general motion verbs must in Standard French:

(11) a. Il est venu/parti/sorti/rentré/etc.
b. *Il est allé/a été/est retourné.
c. Il est allé/a été/est retourné à la maison.

Another syntactic discrepancy between specific and general motion verbs is that the PI cannot be used immediately following the latter. There must be an intervening locative complement between the general motion verb and the PI:

(12) a. *Il est allé/a été/est retourné pour prendre le petit déjeuner.
b. Il est allé/a été/est retourné au restaurant pour prendre le petit déjeuner.

Specific motion verbs may be used with the PI irrespective of whether there is a locative complement or not:

(13) a. Il est venu/parti/etc. pour prendre le petit déjeuner.
b. Il est venu/parti/etc. au restaurant pour prendre le petit déjeuner.

As to the BI, its use with both general and specific verbs of motion does not depend on the presence or absence of a locative complement:

(14) a. Je suis allé/retourné/ai été (à La Ronde) rencontrer des amis.
b. Je suis venu/parti/etc. (à La Ronde) rencontrer des amis.

2.4 USE OF THE PI INSTEAD OF THE BI

In performing an analysis of the use of the preposition *pour* in the spoken French of the 28 grades 2 and 5 Welland and Sudbury Franco-Ontarian students, Beniak et al. (1977) discovered that the PI was sometimes being used in contexts where it would have been more appropriate to use the BI, i.e., in factive contexts:

(15) a. Interviewer: Raconte-moi ce que vous avez fait au camp ?
b. Student: On a décidé d'aller pour se baigner. (more appropriate would have been: On a décidé d'aller se baigner)

(16) a. Interviewer: Qu'est-ce qu'elle a fait ta mère ?
b. Student: Elle a été pour voir ma cousine. (more appropriate would have been: Elle a été voir ma cousine).

Beniak et al. were puzzled by this apparent expression of purpose where purpose is not required. Out of the total of 33 occurences of the PI in the speech of the students, 24 were judged to have been used in factive contexts, the other nine in appropriate purposive contexts. Alongside these 24 factive PI, the authors noted 161 appropriate uses of the BI. Thus the students' rate of use of the PI instead of the BI was 24/185 or 13%. My intent in the remainder of this section is to try and provide an explanation for this phenomenon.

The above results have to be interpreted as evidence that the Franco-Ontarian students are using the PI in two ways: on the one hand they are

using it as a purpose construction, in keeping with standard usage, and, on the other, as a semantically equivalent variant of the BI (nonstandard usage). In other words, it would appear that the Franco-Ontarian students are generalizing the structure but not the function of the PI by using a semantically empty *pour* to introduce the BI. It remains to be explained, however, why and how the Franco-Ontarian students are carrying out this structural generalization.

The BI is rather uncommon in French. It is found only after a restricted set of verbs, among them motion verbs, verbs of perception and the semiauxiliaries (Grevisse 1975:748). The great majority of verbs which can occur with a following infinitive require that the infinitive be introduced by a preposition (*à* or *de*). It is therefore possible that the students' use of *pour* before the BI in factive contexts represents a tendency to regularize the exceptional structure of the BI. This is all the more plausible as the infinitive after verbs of perception also tends to be introduced by a preposition in the spoken French of the same students, e.g., *il pense de venir jouer dans le sable*. That the students are using *pour* rather than *de* or *à* to introduce the BI might seem surprising in view of the fact that (i) *de* and *à* are the prepositions which normally introduce infinitives and (ii) *de* and *à* are semantically empty when they perform that function. The students' use of *pour* is nonetheless relatable to several factors.

First, in the spoken French of the students there are instances of the use of *pour* to introduce the infinitive expressing the notion 'to be about to' after the two verbs of motion *aller* and *venir*:

(17) a. I' racule pas quand i' vient pour se battre.

b. Les deux madames traversent, i' vont pour traverser la rue.

The preposition *pour* is semantically empty in the above examples. This is a first indication that *pour* has a proclivity to shed its main sense of purpose.

Second, Beniak et al. (1977) report several examples in the spoken French of the students where *à* and *de* introducing an infinitive are replaced by *pour*:

(18) a. J'les invite pour v'nir se baigner.

b. Elle lui a demandé pour aller au magasin.

As in the previous pair of examples, *pour* is semantically empty here. In this connection, Aub-Buscher (1976) presents data that suggest a similar extension of the scope of *pour* in the French-based creoles spoken in the Caribbean. She points out in particular that *pour* may be used as a semantically empty preposition, especially before an infinitive, while at the same time fully preserving its purpose meaning in other contexts.

In sum, the Franco-Ontarian students' use of *pour* as a semantically empty preposition to introduce the BI of motion verbs is quite in keeping with parallel developments in the use of *pour* in other areas of their verb system and in the verb system of other varieties of French. The insertion of *pour* before the BI of motion verbs would seem to be the reflection of a latent tendency in French for the infinitive of all verbs to be introduced by a preposition.

This is not to say, however, that this nonstandard use of *pour* is solely the result of the internal properties of French described above. Interference from English, the students' other language, could be another contributing factor. In English the preposition *to* serves as a sandhi form to introduce the infinitive of practically all verbs that can take one. But in addition to this use, in which it is semantically empty, the preposition *to* also serves to mark purpose before the infinitive. It follows, then, that both the factive and purpose infinitives are introduced by *to* in English:

(19) a. I went there to study, not to have fun. (purpose)

b. I went to eat at a Mexican restaurant yesterday. (fact)

Since all of the Welland and Sudbury students have a good command of English (superior, for some, to their command of French), their insertion of *pour* before the BI could also be the result of the influence of the English marking pattern. More specifically, one may plausibly suppose that the Franco-Ontarian students establish a crosslinguistic association between *to* and *pour* under their purpose readings and that this association serves as the basis for the use of a semantically empty *pour* before the BI of motion

verbs on the analogy of the nonpurposive *to* in English. In other words, it is possible to hypothesize that the internal properties of the French verb system described above and English interference are operating conjointly to produce the insertion of *pour* before the BI of motion verbs.

One may still wish to inquire, however, whether each one of the two causal factors, on its own, is sufficient to bring about the insertion of *pour* before the BI of motion verbs. I would like to try and tackle this question here.

If the internal properties of French described above were sufficiently powerful, one would expect to find evidence of the insertion of *pour* before the BI of motion verbs in the speech of monolingual Francophones. I looked for such evidence in the speech of the 14 monolingual francophone students from Quebec City (i.e., the seven grade 2 and seven grade 5 students) and in the spoken French of six of the 15 monolingual francophone students from Montreal (i.e., the three grade 2 and three grade 5 students). The search showed that the Quebec City students used the BI a total of 135 times and the PI only twice while the Montreal students used the BI 36 times and the PI not even once. The two linguistic contexts in which the Quebec City students used the PI were judged to call for a purpose reading. Therefore there is no evidence that the Québécois students are using *pour* as a semantically empty preposition to introduce the BI of motion verbs. However, this absence cannot be taken as conclusive proof that the properties of the French verb system mentioned above are insufficiently powerful, on their own, to trigger the insertion of *pour* before the BI. There remains the possibility that this use of *pour* is a feature of the spoken French of younger monolingual Francophones but that such use is already overcome by the time they reach grade 2. In other words, *pour* insertion before the BI of motion verbs may correspond to a developmental stage in the acquisition of this infinitival construction, such that to find traces of this stage one would have to consult the speech of monolingual natives between the ages, of, say, 2 and 5. Since my sample of Québécois speakers does not include such younger learners, I turned to the acquisition literature in the hope of finding information on the French child's acquisition of the BI of motion verbs. Unfortunately, the sources

that I was able to consult (Grégoire 1968, Bronckart 1976 and several others) did not include the BI as part of their scope of investigation. Thus while I have presented evidence that the insertion of *pour* before the BI of motion verbs is internally motivated in French, at the present time there is unfortunately no hard data showing that such insertion is or is not a feature of the French child's developing grammar.

Let us now turn to the question of whether English interference, on its own, could be at the root of the insertion of *pour* before the BI of motion verbs in the speech of the bilingual Franco-Ontarian students. This question would seem to be insoluble at this juncture given that the answer to it depends directly on the answer to the first question. If future research on the acquisition of French as a first language were to reveal that the French child goes through a stage where he inserts *pour* in front of the BI of motion verbs, then it would have to be concluded that English interference is at best a secondary cause. Were it to show that no such insertion takes place, then it would have to be concluded that English interference is the principal if not the sole underlying cause. But until such research is forthcoming, we are compelled to remain in a position of uncertainty as to whether the insertion of *pour* before the BI of motion verbs by the bilingual Franco-Ontarian students is the sole outcome of intralinguistic pressures, the sole outcome of interlinguistic pressures, or the outcome of the combination of these two types of pressures.[12]

Whatever the underlying cause(s) of the insertion of *pour* before the BI of motion verbs might be, however, or, more precisely, since we have shown this insertion to be motivated, in theory, both intra- and interlinguistically, one can make the prediction that *pour* insertion should also turn up in the speech of Anglophone students learning French as a second language. I tested out this prediction by examining the spoken French of 30 of the 75 early French immersion students (i.e., the 15 grade 2 and 15 grade 5 students). These students used the BI a total of 69 times and the PI a total of 36 times. But of these 36 PI, more than half were judged to have been used in factive contexts. As reported earlier, the Franco-Ontarian students used the PI 24 times in factive contexts but otherwise appropriately used the BI a total of 161 times. In short, the French immersion students not

only commit the same insertion of *pour* but they do so at an even higher rate than the Franco-Ontarian students. This latter finding makes sense when considered in the light of our discussion (section 0.4) of the problems of degree of exposure to French and opportunity to use French. We saw that the French immersion students' exposure to and use of French is essentially restricted to the school domain while the minority Franco-Ontarian students at least begin to learn French at home and get some additional exposure to the language and opportunity to use it in the community and follow this up by going to French language schools. Given these language input and output differences, it is only normal that the French immersion students are less advanced in their acquisition of the BI of motion verbs than the Franco-Ontarian students. By the same token, it is only natural that the Franco-Ontarian students are less advanced in their acquisition of the BI of motion verbs than the Québécois students, assuming *pour* insertion is a feature of native child speech. The finding also makes sense when considered in the light of the students' knowledge of English. Assuming English interference plays a part in the insertion of *pour* in front of the BI of motion verbs, it is only normal once again, given the obvious differences in knowledge of English between the three student groups, that the French immersion students are the ones who are the least advanced in their acquisition and that the Québécois students are the most advanced.

In a different connection, when describing the two different types of motion verbs, I played up the existence of a syntactic constraint on the use of the PI after general verbs of motion like *aller*. It was shown that standard usage requires that a locative complement accompany the general motion verb (see examples 12a and b). Out of the nine PI that were appropriately used in purposive contexts by the Franco-Ontarian students, seven occurred with a general motion verb. Two of these seven purposive PI violated the syntactic constraint:

(20) a. Y'était allé ∅ pour tuer sa femme.

b. C'est une fille qui allait ∅ pour donner du gâteau.

Despite these two violations of the constraint, the students observed it significantly more often (71%) than they broke it (29%). When describing

the two types of motion verbs we also saw that this syntactic constraint does not bear on the use of the BI with general motion verbs. In view, on the one hand, of the structural identity of the purposive and factive PI, but, on the other, of the semantic identity of the factive PI and the BI, it can be asked whether the Franco-Ontarian students transferred the syntactic constraint to the use of the factive PI. That is, to what extent did they use the factive PI immediately after a general motion verb ? An examination of the 24 factive PI produced by the Franco-Ontarian students revealed that 20 of them occurred with a general motion verb and that in 10 of these 20 cases there was no locative complement between the general motion verb and the factive PI (see 15b and 16b). That there was no locative complement in 50% of the uses of the factive PI with a general motion verb suggests to me that the factive PI is taking on the syntactic properties of the BI.

2.5 CONCLUSION

We have not made much of the fact that the coalescence of the purposive and factive meanings of *pour* before the infinitive of motion verbs results in formal ambiguity. To the extent that this formal ambiguity could impede communication, one might look for the verb system to allow a therapeutic intervention. This intervention could take the form of a compensatory construction such as the finite conjoined sentence pointed out by McArthur (1971). That such a therapeutic intervention is not farfetched is suggested by the fact that the English language has already developed the finite alternative.

(21) a. What did you do last night ?
b. I went to see a movie.
c. I went and saw a movie.

It would therefore be interesting to reexamine the Franco-Ontarian Students' speech in order to check for the possible presence of the finite equivalent of the BI.

The extension of the scope of *pour* via the adjunction of semantically empty uses after motion verbs and other types of verbs (see example 18a and b) may seem at first sight somewhat paradoxical in the sense that *pour* is first

and foremost a semantically strong preposition. Yet it would seem to me that the weakening of *pour* is consonant with what has happened to many a preposition in the course of the evolution of the French language. To give but one example taken from Brunot and Bruneau (1969), the scope of the preposition *à* underwent a similar extension which culminated toward the end of the 16th century.[13]

It is also interesting to note that motion verbs could take a BI in Latin and that French is the only Romance language that has preserved this construction. For example, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian all introduce the factive infinitive by the preposition *a*. As to the purpose infinitive, it is introduced by the prepositions *para* or *per*, cognates of French *pour*. Now up until the 18th century verbs of motion in French could be used with an infinitive introduced by the preposition *à* which signalled purpose, but this *à* infinitive gave way to the PI (Brunot 1966). In contrast, it would seem that in the other languages of Latin origin mentioned above the *a* infinitive survived by winning out over the BI. The reasons why French evolved differently from the other Romance languages are not known.

Finally, in this study I did not investigate the Franco-Ontarian students' acquisition of the BI of motion verbs as a function of their dominant language of communication and grade level. Nor did I examine the Québécois and French immersion students' acquisition of the BI of motion verbs as a function of their grade level. If the correlation that was argued to exist between the degree of mastery of the BI of motion verbs and the degree of exposure to and opportunity to use French is valid, it is to be expected that language dominance and grade level would also have been found to be correlated with the degree of mastery of the BI of motion verbs. I have taken these two factors into consideration in the following study on the acquisition of the reflexive pronoun of French pronominal verbs.

3. ACQUISITION OF THE REFLEXIVE PRONOUN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

There have been several studies of the acquisition of French as a first or second language which among other things have looked at the acquisition of the morphology of pronominal verbs (Grégoire 1968; Canale, Mougeon and Beniak 1978; Mougeon et al. 1980; Spilka 1976; Harley and Swain 1978). All of these studies have shown that learners of French, whether native or not, omit the reflexive pronoun that is part of the morphology of pronominal verbs. None of these studies, however, considered the acquisition of the reflexive pronoun from the point of view of the different pronominal verbs. Yet there is evidence, albeit indirect, that such a verb by verb approach could reveal interesting differences in the acquisition of the reflexive pronoun. Thus Canale, Mougeon and Bélanger (1978) found that the analogical leveling of the auxiliary *être* by Franco-Ontarian students varied in strength as a function of the different verbs under investigation and furthermore that this verb by verb variation was not random but structured (i.e., accountable in terms of certain linguistic properties of the verbs). In light of this, it seemed pertinent to me to undertake a more in-depth study of the acquisition of the reflexive pronoun with the verb by verb approach in mind. Such is the main purpose of the present study. In accordance with what was said at the end of the preceding study, another purpose of the present study is to examine the acquisition of the reflexive pronoun as a function of the age and language dominance of the speakers. Since only the Franco-Ontarian students are variably dominant in one language or the other, it is their acquisition of the reflexive pronoun that I will be mainly concerned with in the present study, as opposed to that of the Québécois or French immersion students.

3.2 VERB BY VERB VARIATION

The 108 grades 2 and 5 Franco-Ontarian students used 63 different pronominal verbs with a combined total of 670 tokens. Of these 670 tokens, 154 did not contain a reflexive pronoun. The Franco-Ontarian students thus omitted the reflexive pronoun in 23% of all pronominal verb tokens. In order to determine whether there was verb by verb variation in the rate of omission

of the reflexive pronoun, I calculated a percentage of omission of the reflexive pronoun for each pronominal verb with at least 10 tokens. The results of this calculation appear in the table on the next page.

Table 1 shows a very considerable amount of variation in the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun depending on the pronominal verb. Three verbs were never or practically never used without the reflexive pronoun: *s'appeler* (0%), *s'en venir* (0%) and *s'en aller* (1%). In stark contrast to these three verbs, *se laver + D.O.* (73%) and *se brosser + D.O.* (75%) were much more often than not used without the reflexive pronoun. The remaining pronominal verbs display intermediary percentages of omission of the reflexive pronoun ranging from 14% for *se souvenir* and *se rappeler* to 41% for *se cacher*. Before attempting to account for this tremendous variation in the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun, I would like to point out that I also noticed a few instances where the Franco-Ontarian students supplied the improper form of the reflexive pronoun. In each case the improper reflexive pronoun was the third person singular *se* or *s'* (e.g., J'ai s'en allé à l'école; Je se lève). In this connection, Grégoire (1968:136 observed similar uses of *se* or *s'* in the speech of his two young native learners of French. The existence of such uses suggests that there is a stage in the acquisition of French pronominal verbs where the reflexive pronoun *se* or *s'* tends to be used as an invariable prefix. According to Yves-Charles Morin (personal communication), the generalization of *se* or *s'* to other persons is a feature of popular French and of certain dialects in France. In a somewhat different vein, to the extent that children acquiring French as a first language tend to place object pronouns in postverbal instead of preverbal position (see Grégoire 1968: 104-107), one might also have expected signs of the same tendency to show up in the speech of the Franco-Ontarian students. However, I found no evidence of such misplacements as *Je réveille me/moi* or *Il lave se/lui* in their speech. This may be an indication that the tendency to use object pronouns in postverbal position is overcome early in the course of acquisition, at least as far as reflexive pronouns are concerned.

3.3 CAUSES OF THE VERB BY VERB VARIATION

The morphology of French pronominal verbs is irregular among other ways

TABLE 1: Rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun by verb

VERBS	OMISSIONS	VERB TOKENS	% OF OMISSION
s'appeler	0	24	0%
s'en venir	0	17	0%
s'en aller	1	103	1%
se souvenir	3	22	14%
se rappeler	8	57	14%
s'habiller	7	35	20%
se réveiller	5	22	23%
se baigner	16	66	24%
s'asseoir	8	30	27%
se laver - D.O.	6	17	35%
se lever	14	37	38%
se coucher	26	69	38%
se cacher	7	17	41%
se laver + D.O.	11	15	73%
se brosser + D.O.	18	24	75%
others	26	115	23%
TOTALS	154	670	23%

NOTE: The notations + D.O. and -D.O. respectively indicate the presence and absence of a direct object following the verb, the direct object referring to a body part (e.g., mains, dents, visage, etc.).

in that, with the exception of impersonal verbs (e.g., Il se peut que je vienne) and passive pronominal verbs (e.g., Ce vin se boit bien), no other verbs in French require an object personal pronoun. The study of Grégoire provides ample evidence that the acquisition of nonpronominal verbs precedes that of pronominal verbs. Thus we can hypothesize that the tendency of Grégoire's subjects and of the Franco-Ontarian students to omit the reflexive pronoun represents an attempt to level the morphological distinction between pronominal verbs and simple active verbs. It is interesting to note that the pronominal voice, formerly widespread in Old French, has been considerably reduced in Modern French (Brunot and Bruneau 1969:275). Thus it would seem that learners of French tend to operate the same morphological simplification that has characterized the evolution of the French language (Grégoire 1968:136).

However, the above account does not explain why the simplification process affects the pronominal verbs listed in Table 1 in varying proportions. Below I would like to present and discuss several linguistic factors which I think may be responsible for a large part of the observed variation. These factors are the following:

(1) the existence of nonpronominal counterparts of the pronominal verbs

(2) whether these counterparts are semantically equivalent to their corresponding pronominal forms

(3) the frequency of the semantically equivalent nonpronominal counterparts

(4) the function of the reflexive pronoun

(5) the creation of formal ambiguity

(6) the frequency of the pronominal verbs

3.3.1 NONPRONOMINAL COUNTERPARTS

It seems reasonable to assume that the existence of a non-pronominal counterpart of a given pronominal verb may reinforce the Franco-Ontarian students' tendency to omit the reflexive pronoun. The reasoning is that they may be led to do so on the analogy of the reflexiveless morphology of the previously acquired nonpronominal homophone. Returning to the

pronominal verbs listed in Table 1, *se souvenir* does not have a nonpronominal counterpart, i.e., *souvenir* is not a verb. While *s'en venir* and *s'en aller* do have nonpronominal counterparts (e.g., en venir aux coups; en aller de même pour), these verbs are so rare that we can safely assume that they are not part of the linguistic competence of the Franco-Ontarian students. All of the other pronominal verbs appearing in Table 1 have nonpronominal counterparts with which we can assume the students to have some measure of familiarity, more or less great depending on the nonpronominal counterpart (see factor (3) further). One may thus make the claim that the tendency to omit the reflexive pronoun should be weaker with *se souvenir*, *s'en venir* and *s'en aller* than with the other pronominal verbs. An examination of Table 1 reveals nil or virtually nil rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun for *s'en venir* and *s'en aller* but a rate of omission of 14% for *se souvenir*. Hence one might wonder why *se souvenir*, *s'en venir* and *s'en aller* do not display the same rates of omission. I suggest that the higher than expected rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun with *se souvenir* may be due to the influence of the simplification process as it applies to *se rappeler*. Indeed, *se souvenir* has the same meaning as *se rappeler* and it can be noticed furthermore that both verbs have the same rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun. This is perhaps not a coincidence.

. On its own, however, factor (1) is not sufficient to account for the absence of reflexive pronoun omission with *s'appeler* nor the variation in the rate of reflexive pronoun omission with the other verbs that have nonpronominal counterparts.

3.3.2 SEMANTIC EQUIVALENCE

It seems logical to suppose that the analogical simplification of the morphology of a pronominal verb hypothesized above in 3.3.1 will be greater if the nonpronominal counterpart has the same meaning. *Se rappeler* is the only pronominal verb in Table 1 which does not possess a semantically equivalent nonpronominal counterpart (excluding, of course, the 'true' pronominals *s'en venir*, *s'en aller* and *se souvenir*), i.e., *se rappeler* 'remember' but *rappeler* 'remind, call again'. Assuming the supposition above correct, the reflexive pronoun should be omitted less often with *se rappeler* than

with those verbs in Table 1 that have a semantically equivalent nonpronominal counterpart. Table 1 shows that this is the case, with the exception once again of *s'appeler*. In addition to failing to account for the lower rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun with *s'appeler* than with *se rappeler*, factor (2) does not allow us to explain the variation in the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun displayed by the other verbs in Table 1 that possess a semantically equivalent nonpronominal counterpart, i.e,. *s'habiller* (20%) to *se brosser + D.O.* (75%).

3.3.3 FREQUENCY OF THE SEMANTICALLY EQUIVALENT NONPRONOMINAL COUNTERPARTS

It seems reasonable to argue that the more familiar the Franco-Ontarian students are with a given sementically equivalent nonpronominal counterpart, the more likely the latter is to act as a reinforcing agent in the simplification of the morphology of the pronominal verb. In order to get some objective idea of the students' degree of familiarity with the different semantically equivalent nonpronominal counterparts, I examined their frequency of occurrence in the speech of a subsample of the students for which the Franco-Ontarian Centre has a computer concordance (i.e., the grades 2 and 5 Sudbury and Welland students). This examination yielded the following frequencies: *appeler* (0), *habiller* (0), *baigner* (0), *asseoir* (0), *laver - D.O.* (0), *réveiller* (2), *lever* (2), *brosser + D.O.* (2), *cacher* (3), *laver + D.O.* (9) and *coucher* (12). If we resort to a simple dichotomous classification, opposing those semantically equivalent nonpronominal counterparts which did not appear in the concordance to those that did, the pronominal verbs that correspond to the first five verbs in the frequency list should have lower rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun than the pronominal verbs that correspond to the remaining six verbs in the frequency list. Table 1 reveals that two pronominal verbs de not conform to this prediction, namely *se réveiller* and *se laver - D.O.* The rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun with *se réveiller*, 23%, is significantly lower than the rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun with the other pronominal verbs whose semantically equivalent nonpronominal counterparts are attested in the concordance. As to *se laver - D.O.* its higher rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun in comparison to the

other pronominal verbs which have nonoccurring semantically equivalent nonpronominal counterparts could be due to the analogical effect of the rather frequent *laver + D.O.* construction. In any case, we have yet to explain why *s'appeler* has a nil rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun and why *se laver + D.O.* and *se brosser + D.O.* have very high rates.

3.3.4 FUNCTION OF THE REFLEXIVE PRONOUN

The pronominal verbs listed in Table 1 fall into one of three categories. On the one hand there are the 'subjective' pronominals *s'en venir*, *s'en aller* and *se souvenir*, whose reflexive pronoun has no syntactic function. It is as if it were an agglutinated part of the verb (see Grevisse 1975:597). In fact this may be another reason why the Franco-Ontarian students do not have much difficulty usign the reflexive pronoun with these verbs. On the other hand there are the 'reflexive' pronominals. All of the other verbs in Table 1 except *se laver + D.O.* and *se brosser + D.O.* belong to this category. The reflexive pronoun of such verbs functions as a direct object (or as an indirect object in pronominal verbs like *se nuire* for example). Finally there are what I have chosen to call the 'possessive' pronominal verbs, of which *se laver + D.O.* and *se brosser + D.O.* are two representatives. The reflexive pronoun of the latter type of pronominal verbs does not function as a direct or indirect object but rather, as Spilka (1976) has observed, as a possessive marker. In other words, pronominal verbs which can take a direct object referring to a part of the subject's body would seem to be peculiar transforms of the regular possessive construction verb + possessive adjective + noun. Thus, for example, *je me brosse les dents* or *il se lave les mains* are transforms of *je brosse mes dents* and *il lave ses mains*. It so happens, however, that the regular possessive constructions *je brosse mes dents* and *il lave ses mains* are nonstandard. In sum, learners of French also have to contend with the analogical influence of the regular possessive construction verb - possessive adjective - noun in the course of acquisition of pronominal verbs such as *se laver + D.O.* and *se brosser + D.O.* I submit that this is the reason why the Franco-Ontarian students are less advanced in their acquisition of these two pronominal verbs. Note that speakers could obviate the loss of reflexiveness resulting from the omission of

the reflexive pronoun with the reflexive pronominal verbs by using the tonic form of the reflexive pronoun in postverbal position (e.g., je lave moi). However, we had occasion to see earlier that while such postposing of object pronouns is a feature of child language acquisition, it is overcome early and thus does not constitute a serious retarding influence in the acquisition of the reflexive pronominal verbs.

3.3.5 CREATION OF FORMAL AMBIGUITY

In the specific cases of *s'appeler* and *se laver - D.O.*, the omission of the reflexive pronoun results not only in the loss of reflexiveness but in polysemous verb forms. For example, if the reflexive pronoun is omitted from *je m'appelle Marie*, the resultant sentence, *j'appelle Marie*, is ambiguous. It could either mean 'I am calling Mary' or 'my name is Mary'. Similarly, if the reflexive pronoun is omitted in *je me lave*, the result, *je lave*, is ambiguous, meaning either 'I am washing myself' or 'I am washing (something)'. Concerning such ambiguity, it has been claimed by historical linguists (e.g., Anttila 1972) that one of the major principles of language change is that of 'one meaning, one form', i.e., languages (or language learners) strive to avoid the creation of polysemous linguistic forms. According to this principle, then, *s'appeler* and *se laver - D.O.* should perhaps always be used with the reflexive pronoun. Table 1 shows that this is in fact the case for *s'appeler* (0%) but not for *se laver - D.O.* (38%). One possible explanation of this discrepancy arises if one considers the respective frequencies of the conflicting nonpronominal counterparts of *s'appeler* and *se laver - D.O.* The use of *appeler* in the sense of 'call someone' is very frequent in French. I counted 16 cases of this use of *appeler* in the computer concordance described earlier. In contrast, the use of *laver - D.O.* is not and, not surprisingly, no occurrences of *laver - D.O.* were found in the concordance as reported previously in section 3.3.3. In view of this, it would seem reasonable to hypothesize that the Franco-Ontarian students do not perceive any ambiguity in the expression (e.g., je lave) which results from the omission of the reflexive pronoun with *se laver - D.O.* but that they perceive the ambiguity of the expression (e.g., j'appelle Marie) which ensues from the omission of the reflexive pronoun with *s'appeler*. If Anttila's principle is really at work here, it would certainly seem to act as a strong deterrent of reflexive pronoun omission.

3.3.6 FREQUENCY OF THE PRONOMINAL VERBS

It has often been observed that analogical leveling tends to affect infrequent items before frequent ones, other things being equal (see, among others, Hooper 1976 and Martinet 1969: 115ff). Thus one may hypothesize that the reflexive pronoun will tend to be omitted more often with infrequent pronominal verbs. If we take the frequencies of the pronominal verbs that appear in Table 1 as a reflection of these verbs' frequencies in the language, one would predict *s'en aller* should have the lowest rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun given that it is far and away the most frequent pronominal verb in Table 1. While its 1% rate of omission is certainly consonant with its high frequency, the fact that *s'appeler* and *s'en venir* display a nil rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun despite their much lower frequencies shows that the frequency hypothesis, like each one of the hypotheses or factors previously examined, is not, on its own, enough to explain the verb by verb variation in the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun. Only when taken together do the six causal factors reviewed above allow us to capture most of the variation. This is the point that I would like to stress in the summary discussion immediately below.

3.3.7 SUMMARY

The table on the following page summarizes the six factors which have been hypothesized to lie at the root of the verb by verb variation in the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun. The plus sign (+) indicates that a given pronominal verb is affected by the causal factor in question, a minus sign (-) that it is not and NA that the causal factor in question does not apply. The causal factors numbered across the top of the table are explained in the legend below:

(1) the pronominal verb has a nonpronominal counterpart
(2) the nonpronominal counterpart is semantically equivalent
(3) the semantically equivalent nonpronominal counterpart is frequent
(4) the reflexive pronoun functions as a reflexive marker
(5) reflexive pronoun omission does not create formal ambiguity
(6) the pronominal verb is not of high frequency

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF THE CAUSAL FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VERB BY VERB VARIATION IN THE RATE OF OMISSION OF THE REFLEXIVE PRONOUN

Verbs	Omission rate	Causal factors (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
s'appeler	0%	+	+	-	-	-	+
s'en venir	0%	-	NA	NA	NA	+	+
s'en aller	1%	-	NA	NA	NA	+	-
se souvenir	14%	-	NA	NA	NA	+	+
se rappeler	14%	+	-	NA	-	+	+
s'habiller	20%	+	+	-	-	+	+
se réveiller	23%	+	+	+	-	+	+
se baigner	24%	+	+	-	-	+	+
s'asseoir	27%	+	+	-	-	+	+
se lever	37%	+	+	+	-	+	+
se coucher	38%	+	+	+	-	+	+
se laver - D.O.	38%	+	+	-	-	+	+
se cacher	41%	+	+	+	-	+	+
se laver + D.O.	73%	+	+	+	+	+	+
se brosser + D.O.	75%	+	+	+	+	+	+

Note that I have worded the causal factors in such a way that a plus sign favors the omission of the reflexive pronoun and a minus sign doesn't. Thus the more plus signs a verb has, the more often its reflexive pronoun should be omitted. Also, verbs with the same plus and minus entries should display approximately the same rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun. Table 2 shows that such is the case, with the exception of the three discrepant verbs pointed out earlier: *se souvenir*, *se réveiller*, *se laver - D.O.* These are relatively minor exceptions as the rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun with these three verbs don't differ markedly from the rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun with the other verbs that share the same plus and minus configurations.

3.4 THE EFFECT OF LANGUAGE DOMINANCE

On the basis of the language use questions asked the Franco-Ontarian students during the interviews (see section 1.2), the Franco-Ontarian Centre was able to establish each student's dominant language of communication, i.e., French, English or roughly equal use of French and English. It has been shown in a number of studies that in a situation of language contact, bilingual learners who are dominant in the majority language have a greater proclivity to eliminate morphological irregularities characteristic of the minority language than those learners who are dominant in the minority language (among others, see Dorian 1978, Harley 1979 and Canale, Mougeon and Beniak 1978). Since the reflexive pronoun is an irregular feature of the morphology of the French verb system, it is to be expected that the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun is correlated with the students' language dominance. As a first attempt to test this prediction, I calculated a general rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun by each one of the three language dominance groups.

Table 3 indeed reveals that the more the students use English, the more they omit the reflexive pronoun. I then broke down the general rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun on a verb by verb basis. For this purpose, I grouped together the English-dominant students and the students with roughly equal use of French and English. This was done because of the paucity of data for the latter group. This regrouping is furthermore justified on the

grounds that the two groups of students show similar rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun. For the sake of simplicity of exposition, I shall refer to the students in the two conflated groups as English-dominant.

TABLE 3: REFLEXIVE PRONOUN OMISSION AS A FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE DOMINANCE

Dominance	Omissions	Verb tokens	% of omission
French	54	427	13%
French English	33	95	35%
English	67	148	45%
TOTALS	154	670	23%

Following the example of Brown (1973), if we arbitrarily consider omission percentages less than or equal to 10% to be indicative of mastery of the reflexive pronoun, Table 4 reveals that while the French-dominant students have mastered the use of the reflexive pronoun with eight of the 15 pronominal verbs, the English-dominant students have mastered the use of the reflexive pronoun with only three of the 15 pronominal verbs. Like Table 1, Table 4 shows that it is with *se laver + D.O.* and *se brosser + D.O.* that use of the reflexive pronoun is the hardest to master, and with *s'appeler*, *s'en venir* and *s'en aller* that it is the easiest.

Let us now compare the Franco-Ontarian students with the grades 2 and 5 Québécois and French immersion students. The rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun by these two groups of students appear in Table 5. The rates for the Québécois students represent the grouped rates of the Quebec City and Montreal Francophones. Because, as pointed out in section 0.4, use of and exposure to French is weakest for the French immersion students, intermediary for the Franco-Ontarian students and maximum for the Québécois students, it is expected that the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun should be

TABLE 4: RATE OF OMISSION OF THE REFLEXIVE PRONOUN BY VERB AND LANGUAGE DOMINANCE[14]

Verbs	French-dominant	English-dominant
s'appeler	0%	0%
s'en venir	0%	0%
s'en aller	0%	2%
se souvenir	0%	43%
se rappeler	10%	19%
s'habiller	14%	31%
se réveiller	0%	38%
se baigner	7%	54%
s'asseoir	7%	44%
se lever	13%	79%
se coucher	32%	43%
se cacher	33%	50%
se laver - D.O.	22%	50%
se laver + D.O.	67%	75%
se brosser + D.O.	64%	83%

highest for the French immersion students, intermediary for the Franco-Ontarian students and lowest for the Québécois students. It can be seen by checking Table 5 against Table 4 that this expectation is confirmed. In particular, it can be seen that the Québécois students have nil rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun with all of the pronominal verbs under investigation. Thus the Québécois students have lower rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun than the French-dominant Franco-Ontarians. In contrast, the immersion rates are consistently higher than those of the English-dominant Franco-Ontarian students (*se baigner* excepted). It can also be seen from Table 5 that the immersion students did not use certain pronominal verbs. Concerning this, Harley and Swain (1978) have argued that the immersion students may be avoiding the use of certain pronominal verbs that have morphologically simplex equivalents. For instance, the immersion students can resort to *partir* instead of *s'en aller* or to *venir* or *arriver* instead of *s'en venir*.

TABLE 5: RATE OF OMISSION OF THE REFLEXIVE PRONOUN BY VERB BY THE QUEBECOIS AND FRENCH IMMERSION STUDENTS

Verbs	Québécois	French immersion
s'appeler	0%	0%
s'en venir	0%	-
s'en aller	0%	-
se souvenir	0%	-
se rappeler	0%	-
s'habiller	0%	45%
se réveiller	0%	61%
se baigner	0%	50%
s'asseoir	0%	100%
se lever	0%	90%
se coucher	0%	55%
se cacher	0%	-
se laver - D.O.	0%	70%
se laver + D.O.	0%	92%
se brosser + D.O.	0%	96%

Since the ratio of French-vs. English-dominant bilingual Franco-Ontarians varies from one locality to another according to the demographic strength of the francophone population in comparison to the anglophone population (see section 0.2), one can expect to find interlocality differences in the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun given that the Franco-Ontarian sample was not weighted in terms of language dominance. In this connection, I calculated a general percentage of omission of the reflexive pronoun as a function of the locality of residence of the students. The percentages were: Cornwall (5%), Sudbury (16%), Welland (24%), Windsor (29%), Pembroke (41%) and North Bay (42%). It can be seen that the strong minority localities, Cornwall (39% Francophones) and Sudbury (29% Francophones), have the lowest omission percentages, while the remaining localities (weak minorities with a francophone population of less than 20%) have the highest percentages of omission.

Finally, it is interesting to note that none of the English translation equivalents of the 15 pronominal verbs that we have been examining is pronominal, although the equivalent of *se laver - D.O.* may optionally be used with a reflexive pronoun (e.g., I am washing (myself). Since all of the Franco-Ontarian students are active users of English, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that their higher rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun relative to the Québécois students is also in part due to English interference. One might also hypothesize that interference from English is likely to be more of a factor in the case of the English-dominant Franco-Ontarian students than in the case of the French-dominant ones. Along the same lines, English interference should be even more pronounced in the case of the French immersion students. The reason that I did not invoke English interference earlier (i.e., during my discussion of the factors responsible for the verb by verb variation in the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun) is that, as just mentioned, none of the English equivalents of the French pronominal verbs under investigation is pronominal. Consequently, while one may wish to attribute a causal role to English interference, English interference must then be hypothesized to affect each French pronominal verb to the same degree. In other words, English interference may indeed be one of the reasons why the Franco-Ontarian and French immersion students omit the reflexive pronoun with French pronominal verbs, but it cannot help to explain why there is verb by verb variation in the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun. Still in connection with English interference, one must not lose sight of the fact that it is not a necessary condition for reflexive pronoun omission to take place since, as reported earlier, Grégoire (1968) observed reflexive pronoun omission in the speech of his two very young monolingual learners of French, and since, as I have not yet had occasion to mention, there were a few omissions of the reflexive pronoun in the speech of the monolingual Québécois students. These omissions occurred with verbs other than the ones that have been the focus of attention here (e.g., Sa bouche (se) ferme et (s') ouvre). In short, English interference, if any, is at best a secondary cause of reflexive pronoun omission as concerns bilingual learners of French.

3.5 THE EFFECT OF AGE

Rather than examine the effect of age on its own, it is more revealing to look at how age interacts with language dominance.

TABLE 6: RATE OF OMISSION OF THE REFLEXIVE PRONOUN AS A FUNCTION OF AGE AND LANGUAGE DOMINANCE

Verbs	French-dominance		English-dominance	
	Grade 2	Grade 5	Grade 2	Grade 5
s'appeler	?	0%	0%	0%
s'en venir	0%	0%	-	0%
s'en aller	0%	0%	0%	11%
se souvenir	0%	0%	?	33%
se rappeler	18%	5%	25%	15%
s'habiller	19%	0%	57%	0%
se réveiller	?	0%	67%	14%
se baigner	13%	4%	64%	36%
s'asseoir	14%	0%	42%	50%
se lever	36%	0%	100%	63%
se coucher	58%	0%	60%	30%
se cacher	25%	40%	100%	20%
se laver - D.O.	50%	0%	33%	60%
se laver + D.O.	?	?	75%	75%
se brosser + D.O.	86%	25%	100%	80%

Table 6 shows that the French-dominant Franco-Ontarian students make significant progress in acquiring the use of the reflexive pronoun between grades 2 and 5, *se cacher*, *se brosser + D.O.* and most probably also *se laver + D.O.* being the only pronominal verbs in the sample with which they have yet to master the use of the reflexive pronoun (our acquisition threshold being once again a rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun equal to or less than 10%)[15]. In contrast, one can see that the English-dominant Franco-Ontarian

students show an overall low level of progress in mastering the use of the reflexive pronoun between grades 2 and 5. Indeed, the grade 5 students have mastered only one more pronominal verb than the grade 2 students. Of course, this difference in mastery over time is to a large extent the result of the fact that the French-dominant students entered school with lower rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun to begin with. Thus if we measure the students' progress not in terms of the number of pronominal verbs mastered but in terms of the difference in the rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun between grades 2 and 5, Table 6 makes it possible to see that for certain pronominal verbs the English-dominant students have in fact reduced their rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun by a wider margin than have the French-dominant students. In any case, the persistence of rather substantial rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun for the majority of the verbs in the sample in the spoken French of the English-dominant students makes one wonder what the chances are that these students, as they pursue their schooling in French, will be able to reach the stage of complete mastery of the reflexive pronoun. The study of Mougeon et al. (1980) provides preliminary evidence that this stage may not be reached. They found that English-dominant students at the high school level continued to omit the reflexive pronoun in more than 10% of all obligatory contexts in Pembroke, a weak minority locality (10% Francophones). This in turn is evidence that the French language school, the chief source of exposure to and opportunity to use French for English-dominant Franco-Ontarian students residing in minority localities (see section 0.2), isn't able to ensure that the latter will eventually come to master the use of the reflexive pronoun. It is possible to conjecture therefore that some English-dominant students will carry the tendency to omit the reflexive pronoun with them into adulthood. In this respect, Conwell and Juilland (1963) observed adult speakers of Louisiana French(like Ontarian French, a variety of French spoken in a minority setting) to omit the reflexive pronoun with some of the verbs that have been examined in the present study.

Let me now turn to the evolution of the acquisition of the reflexive pronoun over time as concerns the Québécois and immersion students. If we compare the results in the table on the next page with those already presented in Table 6, one can see that the French-dominant Franco-Ontarian students

lag behind the Québécois students (Quebec City and Montreal students having been grouped together once again) in speed of acquisition of the reflexive pronoun. The immersion students, on the other hand, have consistently higher rates of omission of the reflexive pronoun than the English-dominant Franco-Ontarian students in grade 2 and in grade 5. Again these differences in speed of acquisition of the reflexive pronoun are exactly those that one expects on the basis of the differences in degree of exposure to and occasion to use French that exist between the Québécois students, the French- and English-dominant Franco-Ontarian students and the French immersion students.

TABLE 7: RATE OF OMISSION OF THE REFLEXIVE PRONOUN AS A FUNCTION OF THE AGE OF THE QUEBECOIS AND IMMERSION STUDENTS

Verbs	Québécois		Immersion	
	Grade 2	Grade 5	Grade 2	Grade 5
s'appeler	0%	0%	0%	0%
s'en venir	0%	0%	-	-
s'en aller	0%	0%	-	-
se souvenir	0%	0%	-	-
se rappeler	0%	0%	-	-
s'habiller	0%	?	80%	17%
se réveiller	0%	0%	88%	40%
se baigner	0%	0%	?	50%
s'asseoir	-	0%	?	?
se lever	?	0%	100%	80%
se coucher	0%	0%	100%	36%
se cacher	?	0%	-	-
se laver - D.O.	?	?	100%	57%
se laver + D.O.	0%	?	100%	75%
se brosser + D.O.	?	0%	100%	92%

3.6 CONCLUSION

The main intent of this study has been to play up and attempt to provide explanations for the fact that the reflexive pronoun is not acquired with equal ease or difficulty depending on the pronominal verb with which it is used. As mentioned in the introduction to this study, it was the findings of Canale, Mougeon and Bélanger (1978) concerning the leveling of the auxiliary *être* in Ontario French which incited me to apply their verb by verb approach to the investigation of the acquisition of the reflexive pronoun. Those familiar with sociolinguistics will have noticed the similarity between the methodology that Canale, Mougeon and Bélanger (1978) have followed and that I have adopted, and the variationist approach to language use that has been developed by Labov and others and which seems to be gaining wider application in the field of language learning research. In fact contemporary sociolinguistic methodology is not only equipped to tackle the problem of linguistic variability but that of interindividual variability as well (via the use of implicational scales for instance). Two recent studies in the language learning literature go a long way toward extending sociolinguistic methodology to the solution of the latter type of variability (Hyltenstam 1977 and Andersen 1978). The following study of the acquisition of French past participles represents, among other things, another attempt on my part to illustrate the relevance of the adoption of the variationist approach.

4. ACQUISITION OF FRENCH PAST PARTICIPLES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Harley and Swain (1978) were able to analyze an impressively broad spectrum of verb functions in their study of the verb system of early French immersion students in Toronto. The reason they were able to consider such a wide range of verb functions was due to the small size of their subject sample, i.e., five fifth-graders. By the same token, however, they were not in a position to perform a detailed analysis of the verb forms which the students used to realize the many different verb functions under investigation. One such aspect of the early immersion students' verb system which was not dealt with in depth by Harley and Swain are the verb forms which the students used as past participles. What Harley and Swain did, essentially, was to identify several different types of erroneous past participles and briefly consider their possible underlying causes. The purpose of the present study is to further the investigation of the early French immersion students' acquisition of French past participles. I propose to do so by focussing on just this aspect of the speech production of a larger sample of similar early French immersion students, namely the 75 grades 2 to 6 students that make up my immersion sample. The 15 grades 2 to 6 Montreal Francophones will serve as a comparison group. The speech of the Franco-Ontarian students, which has been the major focus of the first two acquisition studies, will only be examined in cursory fashion in the present study.

4.2 THE MORPHOLOGY OF FRENCH PAST PARTICIPLES

From the point of view of morphology, past participles in French are of the form stem + inflection (Martinet 1969:91-120). Martinet distinguishes three reflexes of the past participle inflection: -é /e/, -Ø (zero) and -u /y/. These are illustrated in the table below.

TABLE 8: REFLEXES OF THE PAST PARTICIPLE INFLECTION IN FRENCH

-é		-Ø		-u	
mang-é	/mɑ̃ʒ-e/	dit-Ø	/di-Ø/	ven-u	/vən-y/
trouv-é	/truv-e/	fait-Ø	/fe-Ø/	cour-u	/kur-y/
all-é	/al-e/	pris-Ø	/pri-Ø/	v-u	/v-y/
ét-é	/et-e/	eu-Ø	/y-Ø/	l-u	/l-y/

It should be noted that the past participle of some of the -Ø inflection verbs is subject to gender agreement with a preposed D.O. (e.g., dit vs. dite /di-t/). Like Martinet, however, I decided to disregard the problem of gender agreement on the grounds that such agreement is only variably observed in native speech. Thus I shall adopt the simple trichotomous classification presented in Table 8.

As is well known, the vast majority of French verbs (more than 90% according to Guiraud 1973:107) belong to the so-called-er group. Their infinitival and past participle forms are homophonous and end in the inflection -é. This makes -é by far the most generalized reflex of the past participle inflection. The remaining 10% or so of French verbs form their past participle with -Ø or -u. Another distinguishing feature of the verbs belonging to the -er group is that they have only one stem, the stem being homophonous with the 1st, 2nd, 3rd sg. and 3rd pl. forms of the present (e.g., je parle /parl/ vs. j'ai parlé (parl-e/). In contrast, most of the non -er verbs have multiple stems (e.g., il meurt /m œr/ vs. nous mourons /mur-õ/ vs. mourir (muri-r/ vs. elle est morte /mor-t/).

In summary, from a morphological point of view, past participle acquisition involves three steps: (1) the learning of the reflexes of the past participle inflection, (2) the learning of the stem(s) of the verb and (3) the suffixation of the correct inflectional reflex to the proper verb stem. As such, accurate past participle formation would seem to constitute a problem of some intricacy and on this basis one can expect learners to commit errors

in past participle formation. It is possible to predict, however, that learners should have less difficulty acquiring the past participles of the -er verbs than those of the non -er verbs given what was said above about the great numerical superiority of the -er verbs, their single stem and the fact that their past participles all end in -é.

Although I have had recourse to Martinet's account of the morphology of French past participles in order to try and give an idea of the apparent complexity of the learning task that the immersion and francophone students are up against, I do not want to leave the impression that I take it for granted that they analyze the French past participles in the same fashion as the linguist. It is a matter of empirical investigation whether they do so or not and to what extent. I will take this point up again in the final section of this study.

4.3 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In his longitudinal study of the acquisition of French by two native children between the ages of 0 and 4, Grégoire (1968:130, 356) found a tendency on their part to assimilate the morphology of non -er verbs to that of the -er verbs. As concerns the past participle, Grégoire reported his subjects using forms such as *metté* and *répondé* instead of the appropriate forms *mis* and *répondu*. He attributed these erroneous past participles to the powerful analogical influence of the morphology of the previously acquired past participles of the dominant -er verbs. In their analysis of the verb system of their five Toronto French immersion students, Harley and Swain (1978:56, 57) reported similar analogical past participles (e.g., *vené* instead of *venu*). However, they also reported three other types of past participle errors that were not attested by Grégoire in the speech of his two subjects. Examples of these other error types were /prã/ for *pris*, *courir/mettre* instead of *couru/mis* and *ouvri* for *ouvert*.[16] That such errors were not attested by Grégoire does not necessarily mean that they are peculiar to the French immersion students. Indeed, their absence could be due to the very limited size of Grégoire's subject sample. A larger sample of learners might have revealed the existence of these other errors given that learners have been found to resort to different personal strategies

in their acquisition of a given target language item (Hatch 1974). On the other hand, however, the immersion students' acquisition of French at a later age than native speakers may result in unique errors due to heightened hypothesis testing ability (Dulay and Burt 1974; Taylor 1975). A study of the acquisition of past participles by a larger sample of young native speakers of French is needed to resolve the issue.

I would like to consider now the explanations proposed by Grégoire and by Harley and Swain concerning the part participle error types mentioned above.

Their common ascription of errors such as *metté*, *vené* and *répondé* to the analogical influence of the past participles of the much more widespread -er verbs is probably the only possible explanation. Indeed, it is very difficult to imagine on what other basis learners of French could come to produce non -er verb past participles ending in -é. Yet, as I hope to show in the final section of this study, that the above errors are obviously analogical does not mean that the actual analogical process is obvious. I will show that there seem to be at least two different ways in which analogy could be working to yield the same result, namely a non -er verb past participle ending in -é.

Harley and Swain's interpretation of the /prã/ for *pris* error is not convincing. The error occurred in the third person singular (e.g., elle a /prã/ le poule). They suggest that it may be the outcome of the influence of /aprã/, the present tense singular form of the verb *apprendre*. Notice, however, that /prã/ corresponds to the present and imperative singular form of the verb *prendre*. As I report in a subsequent section of this study, numerous similar past participle errors turned up in the speech of my immersion subjects (e.g., tu as /mɛ/; tu es /vjẽ/; etc.). Since the latter errors cannot be explained along the lines of Harley and Swain's account of the /prã/ for *pris* error, it would appear to be more appropriate to interpret all of the above errors as cases of overgeneralization of the present or imperative singular forms of the verbs in question.

It was mentioned earlier that the infinitive and past participle of -er verbs are homophonous. According to Harley and Swain, it may be on the analogy of this homophony that the immersion students in their study substituted the

infinitives *courir* and *mettre* for the corresponding past participles *couru* and *mis*. Alternatively, however, it is possible to interpret these errors as the result not of analogy, but simply of the students' unfamiliarity with the appropriate past participles. Such unfamiliarity would also be the factor lying at the root of the other overgeneralization error examined in the preceding paragraph. This is not to say, however, that the explanation that Harley and Swain have proposed and the alternative one that I am advancing, are mutually exclusive. I don't see why it could not be the case that learners can resort to one or the other or even both types of strategies during their acquisition of French past participles. As will be seen later, it may be precisely because it seems to be the result of two plausible underlying causes that the overgeneralization of the infinitive was more prevalent in the speech of my immersion subjects than the overgeneralization of the present or imperative singular, this latter overgeneralization error having a single origin.

Finally, as mentioned in a footnote, Harley and Swain did not in actual fact report the error type *ouvri* for *ouvert* in their article and consequently there is no discussion in their paper of the possible cause(s) of this sort of past participle error. This type of error, as will be seen, also occurred in my immersion corpus. I will take up the problem of its underlying source(s) in a further section.

4.4 RESULTS

Before beginning the presentation of the results, I would like to mention and discuss several findings which are indirectly related to the problem of past participle acquisition.

4.4.1 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Practically all of the contexts in which the immersion and francophone students were called upon to use compound verb forms (i.e., forms requiring the past participle) were passé composé contexts. There were only three exceptions in the speech of the immersion students and seven in the speech of the francophone students. While the passé composé is the compound tense with

which the immersion students are best acquainted, they were nevertheless unable to supply it systematically in the obligatory contexts, in contrast to the native speakers, who always provided it where required. The immersion students sometimes supplied verb forms without an auxiliary and at other times they supplied what at first sight would seem to be plus-que-parfait forms, the latter result being rather surprising in view of their unfamiliarity with this compound tense. I will consider each of these two findings in more detail.

One of Harley and Swain's five immersion students also used the plus-que-parfait as a substitute for the passé composé. Probably due to their small sample size once again, the authors were led to believe that this use of the plus-que-parfait was idiosyncratic. On the basis of my larger sample, however, I can show that it is not idiosyncratic. The table below plays up the amplitude of the phenomenon in my immersion corpus.

TABLE 9: DISTRIBUTION OF THE PLUS-QUE-PARFAIT FOR PASSE COMPOSE SUBSTITUTIONS

Grades	Substitutions	Number of students
2	1	1
3	64	12
4	15	6
5	9	4
6	10	3
TOTALS	99	26

The fact that there was only one plus-que-parfait substitution at the grade 2 level could be an indication that the immersion students had yet to be introduced to or at least had yet to acquire the imparfait at that stage in their schooling in French. This would in effect make it impossible for them to produce the plus-que-parfait since the auxiliary takes the form of the

imparfait (e.g., j'avais mangé). But given the knowledge of the imparfait (which the students obviously seem to have by the grade 3 level), what could lead them to want to substitute the plus-que-parfait for the passé composé ? The only plausible explanation that I have been able to adduce is that of interference from English tense usage. The English equivalent of the passé composé is in most cases the simple past (e.g., j'ai mangé une tarte 'I *ate* a pie'). The pastness of the verb in English may be a source of interference which leads the immersion students to also overtly mark pastness in French by using the imparfait as opposed to the present form of the auxiliary. The plausibility of this interference-based explanation is perhaps enhanced by the fact that neither Grégoire's nor my native speakers were observed to substitute the plus-que-parfait for the passé composé, an indication that natives just don't make this sort of substitution. That it is still being made by the grade 6 immersion students underscores the lingering effects that interference can have, assuming that such is indeed the error source at work here. In the final analysis, then, the substituting verb forms should probably not be regarded as plus-que-parfait forms but rather as hybrid compound forms representing a cross between the passé composé and the English simple past. What is interesting is that the immersion students have otherwise preserved the compoundness of the passé composé. There are some whom this point might lead to object that if English interference were really at work here, a simple verb form should have been substituted for the passé composé. As already mentioned (see page 49), the immersion students did use auxiliaryless verb forms instead of the passé composé, which we will examine shortly. But I fail to see why interference from English should have to be syntactic (i.e., substitution of a simple verb form for a compound one) rather than morphological (i.e., substitution of the imparfait form of the auxiliary for the present one).

The simple or auxiliaryless verb forms used in lieu of passé composé forms by the immersion students occurred in two types of syntactic constructions, i.e., in lone verb phrases and in conjoined or juxtaposed verb phrases.

TABLE 10: DISTRIBUTION OF SIMPLE VERB FORMS BY GRADE AND SYNTACTIC CONSTRUCTION

Grades	In lone VPs	In conjoined VPs	Totals
2	27	25	52
3	27	14	41
4	14	10	24
5	6	8	14
6	1	5	6
TOTALS	75	62	137

The simple verb forms in lone verb phrases were very much diversified in nature as were the simple verb forms used in conjoined or juxtaposed verb phrases. Some were clearly infinitives (e.g., on *avoir* une dictée; on a mangé et *revenir* à la bateau). Some were clearly present tenses (e.g., ça nous *prend* trois jours; j'ai brossé mes dents, *met* mon chandail). Some were clearly imparfait's (e.g., on *avait* beaucoup de présents à Noël.). Some had the appearance of bare past participles (e.g., je *revenu* à la maison; on a allé en haut et *mis* les vêtements). Some could be interpreted as either imparfait's or bare past participles (e.g., j'*été* à Floride). Finally, some could be interpreted as either imparfait's, bare past participles of infinitives (e.g., le bateau *tombé* dans l'eau; j'ai lavé mon figure et *brossé* mes dents). One can view the substitutions of simple verb forms for the passé composé as cases of syntactic interference from the English simple past, as argued above. This seems especially likely in the examples where the simple verb form was in the imparfait or resembled a bare past participle and was used in a lone verb phrase. The latter, alternatively, can be explained as overgeneralizations of simple verb forms due to the complexity of the compound structure of the passé composé. Harley and Swain propose this explanation for a case of substitution of the present for the passé composé which occurred in the spoken French of one of their immersion students. Harley and Swain also observed substitutions of simple verb forms for the

passé composé in conjoined or juxtaposed verb phrases. In their opinion such examples most probably represent cases of bare past participles resulting from the deletion of the auxiliary. I am in agreement with their interpretation because, in my immersion corpus at least, there were no conjoined or juxtaposed verb phrases in which a simple verb form was substituted for the passé composé in the first verb phrase (i.e., the left-most one) but not in the following one(s). Such sequences would be expected under the assumption that the substitution of a simple verb form for the passé composé in the second (and third, etc.) verb phrase in a conjoined or juxtaposed series is not the result of auxiliary deletion but rather of the overgeneralization of a genuine simple verb form. However, since auxiliary deletion is possible in French (e.g., il a débarrassé la table et fait la vaisselle; on a mangé et bu autant qu'on voulait), I find myself in disagreement with Harley and Swain who claim that it is due to English interference. Another and perhaps equally important reason for disagreeing with Harley and Swain is that, as mentioned previously, the English equivalent of the passé composé is in most cases the simple past, an auxiliaryless tense. In my view auxiliary deletion should perhaps be better seen as the reflection of a natural tendency to eliminate surface structure redundancy, in the present case not only the auxiliary but the subject pronoun of the conjoined or juxtaposed verb as well. As a consequence of the interpretation of the simple verb forms used in conjoined or juxtaposed verb phrases as bare past participles arising from the phenomenon of auxiliary deletion, these are included as part of the data on the acquisition of the past participle that we turn to next.

4.4.2 MAIN FINDINGS

Beginning with the most general findings, my error analysis revealed no past participle errors in the speech of the 15 Montreal Francophones. Thus the native speakers already seemed to have completed their acquisition of the past participle by the second grade. The immersion students performed to some extent like the natives since as early as grade 2 I found only an insignificant proportion of errors in their formation of the past participle of the -er verbs, i.e., in grade 2 only 5 or not even 2% of the 286 -er verb past participles that the students used were incorrectly formed. The errors

all seemed to be cases of substitution of a form which can be interpreted either as a present tense 1st, 2nd, 3rd sg. or 3rd pl. or as an imperative 2nd sg. (e.g., j'ai trouve; j'ai va). Both interpretations are possible because there is evidence from my immersion corpus and from the study of Grégoire (1968) that both the present tense and imperative forms are acquired before the past participle forms. Like Grégoire's two young native speakers, then, the immersion students proceeded to acquire first the past participles of the dominant -er verb group, thereby confirming the prediction made earlier in section 4.2. They were undoubtedly aided by the felicitous homophony of the infinitive and past participle of -er verbs, the infinitive of such verbs being acquired, again according to Grégoire and my own corpus, at an early stage.

In contrast to the comparison students, however, the immersion students were found to commit, as late as grade 6, a significant proportion of errors affecting the past participle of non -er verbs, as illustrated in Table 11. This finding is consonant with the fact that these verbs are in the minority in the French language, that their past participles are morphologically much less predictable than those of the -er verbs and that there is no homophony between their past participial and infinitival forms.

TABLE 11: PERCENTAGES OF ERRONEOUS NON -ER VERB PAST PARTICIPLES PER IMMERSION GRADE

Grades	Errors	Past participles	% of error
2	29	107	27%
3	22	165	13%
4	22	215	10%
5	8	168	5%
6	12	183	7%
Totals	93	838	11%

Since Table 11 presents general percentages of errors, we suspect, in the light, once again, of the findings of the preceding study and of that of Canale, Mougeon and Bélanger (1978), that these general percentages of error hide systematic differences in the percentages of error of individual past participles.

4.4.2.1 VERB BY VERB VARIATION

I investigated the acquisition of each reflex of the past participle inflection and I did so as a function of the verb. The results of this investigation are displayed in Table 12. The dashes (-) indicate that there were no occurrences of the past participle and question marks (?) that there were only one or two occurrences.

TABLE 12: PERCENTAGES OF ERROR PER PAST PARTICIPLE AND PER GRADE LEVEL

Past participle	Inflection	Grade 2	3	4	5	6
dit	-Ø	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
eu	-Ø	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
fait	-Ø	4%	6%	2%	0%	0%
parti	-Ø	-	?	0%	0%	0%
pris	-Ø	50%	27%	5%	0%	0%
fini	-Ø	17%	?	0%	20%	0%
mis	-Ø	40%	24%	15%	11%	25%
dormi	-Ø	75%	50%	0%	?	?
vu	-u	0%	3%	5%	0%	0%
venu	-u	37%	14%	25%	8%	0%
revenu	-u	60%	11%	50%	17%	0%
bu	-u	-	-	-	-	0%
lu	-u	75%	?	?	40%	43%
été	-é	?	-	0%	?	0%

As can be observed from Table 12, there is considerable variation in the rate of acquisition of the different non -er verb past participles listed in the table. An interesting finding is that the past participles of *dire*, *faire*, *avoir* and *voir* are acquired as early as grade 2, just as were the past participles of the -er verbs (10% or less of errors being the acquisition threshold once again). In contrast, the past participles of *mettre* and *lire* are still not acquired in grade 6. Not having set out to investigate the Franco-Ontarian students' acquisition of the past participle but nevertheless wanting some idea as to whether they were committing past participle errors, I reasoned that the most likely candidates for erroneous formation were the past participles of *lire* and *mettre* as we have just seen these to seem to be quite difficult for the immersion students. I looked for errors concerning the past participles of these two verbs in the concordance of the speech of the grades 2 and 5 Sudbury and Welland students and found some. *Li* instead of *lu* and *metté* instead of *mis* were the errors that I found. In grade 2 *metté* accounted for 16% of the past participle forms of *mettre* while in grade 5 it only accounted for 5%. As for *li*, it constituted the only two occurrences of the past participle of *lire* in grade 2 but it was nonexistent in grade 5, although there were only two occurrences of *lu* at that grade level. Judging from these preliminary findings, the Franco-Ontarian students are slower than the Québécois students in their acquisition of the past participles of non -er verbs.

I will not try in this study to account for the variation in the rates of acquisition of the past participles displayed in Table 12. Let me simply mention that verb frequency and whether the past participle is homophonous or not with a previously learned verb form would appear to be two factors that have a bearing on rate of acquisition. For example, the fact that *dire* and *faire* are verbs whose past participles are homophonous with the present tense 1st, 2nd and 3rd sg. forms and are high frequency verbs may explain why the past participles *dit* and *fait* were the object of nil or very low proportions of errors at all grade levels. However, past participles such as *eu* and *vu*, which were also the object of insignificant proportions of errors in spite of the fact that they lack previously learned homophonous counterparts and are probably less frequent than *fait* and *dit*, are countercases which suggest that it is necessary to look for other explanatory factors.

4.4.2.2. UNDERLYING SOURCES OF ERROR

Adjemian (1976) and others have argued that second language learning errors can be attributed to the learner's reliance on or recourse to previously learned forms to express a meaning or function for which he or she has yet to develop the proper target language form. I thus expected some proportion of the past participle errors committed by the immersion students to reflect this strategy. Specifically, I expected substitutions of present tense 1st, 2nd, 3rd sg. and 3rd pl., imperative 2nd sg. and infinitival forms for the past participle since, as stated earlier, these forms are acquired before the compound past forms by native as well as second language learners of French. These expectations were borne out. Out of the total number of errors (93) committed by the grades 2 to 6 immersion students with respect to the formation of the past participles of non -er verbs, 48 or 52% reflected the above - mentioned strategy.[17] In fact, reliance on the infinitive (e.g., j'ai prendre; il a avoir; on a dormir; etc.) was the single most productive strategy, accounting alone for 36% of the 93 past participle errors. Reliance on the above-mentioned present tense or imperative forms (e.g., tu as /mɛ/; tu es /vjɛ̃/; j'ai /atã/; etc.) was far less productive a strategy, accounting alone for 16% of the 93 past participle errors. A possible reason for the immersion students' heavier reliance on the infinitive than on the present tense or imperative may be the homophony which characterizes the infinitive and past participle of the dominant -er verbs. To quote Harley and Swain (1978:58): "The learner might well ask: If in -er verbs it is not possible to distinguish between past participle... and infinitive, then why do it with other verbs ?"[18]

Given the great predominance of -er verbs in French, I also expected that the data would evidence attempts on the part of the immersion students to form the past participle of non -er verbs as they would that of -er verbs, that is, use an -é ending. Errors of the type *il a vené*, *j'ai metté*, etc., which represent 28% of the 93 past participle errors, are a confirmation of this expectation. Unlike the first type of error examined above, I would think that such analogical errors constitute evidence of the learner's coming to grips with the morphology of the past participle.

There is one other type of past participle error which the immersion students committed. These were errors such as *il a ouvri*, *j'ai reveni*, *j'ai prenu*, *il a moru*, etc., which accounted for 15% or 14 of the 93 non -er verb past participle errors. This error type is interesting because it evidences the fact that the past participle of non -er verbs can also serve as the basis for the creation of analogical past participles within that class of verbs (but not outside of it, because the inflections of the past participles of non -er verbs were never used to form the past participle of -er verbs, i.e., there were no examples such as *j'ai chantu* or *il a trouvi*, etc. in my data). That the past participles of non -er verbs cannot serve as the basis for the creation of analogical past participles outside their own class is probably due to the weak minority status of the non -er verbs and to the regularity of the morphology of the past participle of the -er verbs.[19]

To this point in the discussion of the underlying sources of the past participle errors committed by the immersion students, I have yet to consider the possible role of mother tongue interference. Since Dumas, Selinker and Swain (1973) have made the general observation that English interference is one of the major sources of error in the speech of French immersion students, I wanted to see whether this observation was applicable to the particular case of past participle formation.

It has been observed that inflectional morphology doesn't lend itself readily to borrowing (Weinreich 1953). Consonant with this observation, there were no inflectional borrowings in the speech of the immersion students, that is, I found no examples where they had coupled one of the English allomorphs of the past participle inflection to a French verb stem (e.g., *sauted* vs. *sauté*, *vend* vs. *venu* or *frappé*). One possible explanation for this lack of transferability is the relationship of dependence which inflections hold vis-à-vis stems. In other words, inflections are probably not perceived by bilingual learners or speakers as items which are free and therefore transferable. Cases of language switch such as *j'ai 'opened' la porte* for *j'ai ouvert la porte*, of which there were a few occurrences in my immersion corpus, are not counter-examples. On the contrary, they provide further supporting evidence that inflections are dependent on stems and are rarely integrated into the morphology of another language.[20]

The fact that the past participle of a good number of English verbs is homophonous with the simple past form (e.g., *he stopped* and *he has stopped; I stood* and *I have stood;* etc.) is another potential source of interference since it could lead the immersion students to produce past participle errors like *il a finissait*, *j'ai avais*, etc. Such errors, however, were not to be found in their speech.

If anything, the immersion students' native knowledge of English would seem to be a source of positive transfer as far as the acquisition of French past participles is concerned. Like French, English has past participles which can be broken down morphologically into a stem plus a suffix, i.e., one of the allomorphs of the past participle inflection. This crosslinguistic similarity could mean that the immersion students do not have to discover the morphology of past participles in French nor the syntax of the compound past. In this sense the immersion students might have a headstart on the native learner of French as well as on second language learners of French whose mother tongue lacks past participles, the latter hypothesis being empirically testable.

4.4.2.3 CHANGES IN ERROR SOURCE OVER TIME

In two studies of the acquisition of English as a second (Taylor 1975) or third (Lococo 1976) language, it was shown that the proportions of errors attributable to interference and overgeneralization varied over time in a nonrandom fashion. More specifically, the proportion of intersystemic errors decreased and that of intrasystemic errors increased as the learners progressed from early to intermediate stages of acquisition. Given the cross-sectional nature of the present study, I thought it would be of interest to investigate whether the two intralingual sources of past participle errors that have been identified in the present study (i.e., analogy and reliance on previously learned verb forms) could be predicted to change in importance over time and, if so, whether there was indeed a change.

I indicated in the preceding section that the overgeneralization of the infinitive, present tense or imperative probably reflects an ignorance of the morphology of the past participle. As such, it is reasonable to assume that

this strategy should be more characteristic of the interlanguage of the younger immersion students than of the older ones. On the other hand, the analogical errors evidencing the students' coming to grips with the morphology of the past participle should be more characteristic of the approximative system of the older immersion students than of the younger ones.

TABLE 13: CONTRIBUTION OF ERROR SOURCES OVER TIME[21]

Grades	Analogical errors		Overgeneralization errors	
	N	%	N	%
2	11	42%	15	58%
3	6	28%	15	72%
4	12	55%	10	45%
5	5	62%	3	38%
6	6	54%	5	46%
Totals	40	45%	48	55%

A look at Table 13 indicates that these predictions are borne out. It can be seen that in grades 2 and 3 the percentages of errors due to overgeneralization of previously learned verb forms account for a greater proportion of errors than do the two analogical sources of error combined. From grade 4 on, however, the analogical errors showing that the students are coping with the morphology of the past participle are proportionately more frequent than those resulting from the overgeneralization of nonparticipial verb forms. Together with those of Taylor and Lococo, the present findings suggest that in instances where there are several competing sources of second language learning errors, the search for changes in the contribution of each error source over time is revealing, whether it is done for one class of items (e.g., past participles, as in the present study) or for the whole target language (as in Taylor and Lococo's studies). Yet from a methodological standpoint I feel that such a search is best undertaken separately for each class of target

language items (e.g., prepositions, auxiliaries, etc.) under investigation. On the one hand, this discrete rather than general approach renders possible the identification and exclusion of classes of target language items which give rise to errors which are attributable to only one underlying cause. On the other hand, only the discrete approach can reveal whether the contribution of a given error source necessarily shows the same evolution over time across different classes of target language items, an assumption which seems to be implicit in the general approach.

4.4.2.4 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REALITY OF LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTIONS

One of the aims of psycholinguistics has been the experimental verification of some of the abstract constructs posited by linguists (e.g., transformational rules, word derivation processes, phonemes, etc.) in their analyses of various languages. In the particular area of morphology, Derwing and Baker (1977) designed an experiment to test which one, if any, of the several alternative analyses which have been proposed for plural formation in English, has in their words "an empirically defensible claim to psychological reality". Similarly, in this section I would like to attempt to test the psychological reality of the morphological analysis that Martinet (1969) proposed for past participles in French and that I presented at the beginning of this study. The testing ground will be the analogical past participle errors committed by the immersion students (see Table 14). The errors involving the overgeneralization of nonparticipial verb forms are excluded, as are the correct past participle forms, because neither can enlighten us on the issue at hand.

As concerns first of all the analogical past participles ending in -é, let us consider how the process of analogy which underlies them might be working. On the one hand, one may suppose that the students who committed these errors were able to isolate, on the basis of the past participles of -er verbs, the ending -é, that they were also able to isolate some stems of non -er verbs on the basis of certain forms with which they were familiar (e.g., nous ven-ons, vous ven-ez, Ven-ez!), and that they affixed the ending -é to such stems on the analogy of the past participles of the majority -er verbs (e.g., il a ven-é).[22]

TABLE 14: ANALOGICAL PAST PARTICIPLE ERRORS COMMITTED BY THE IMMERSION STUDENTS

Verb	-é	-u	-i
venir	vené		
revenir	revené		reveni
attendre	attendé		
prendre	prené	prenu	
mettre	metté		
dormir		dornu	
lire	lisé		li
mourir	moré	moru	
ouvrir	ouvré		ouvri
rire	rié		
asseoir	assoyé		
partir	parté		
mordre	mordé		
devoir	devré		

On the other hand, with the exception of moré, the analogical past participles ending in -é can also be interpreted as overgeneralizations of previously learned verb forms ending in the sound /e/ (e.g., present tense or imperative 2nd pl. forms or even imparfait 1st, 2nd, 3rd sg. or 3rd pl. forms for those speakers who pronounce them with a final /e/ instead of with the prescribed final /ɛ/).[23] This type of analogy would seem to be based on rhyme, i.e., the form *ven/e/*, for example, rhymes with the past participle of any -er verb and is possibly therefore a prime candidate for overgeneralization as a past participle of *venir* in the absence of knowledge of *venu*. It should be noted that although this sort of analogy operates at a word level, it nonetheless involves the perception of a particular word ending.

Turning to the analogical past participles not ending in -é, *li* is the

only one among them which could be the result of rhyming analogy as it is the only one which possesses homophonous counterparts (e.g., je lis /li/). There does not seem to be any other way to interpret the analogical past participles *prenu* and *moru* except as evidence of isolation of an ending -u and affixation of this ending to a stem. To take the example of *prenu*, one can surmise that the student who committed this error isolated an -u ending on the basis of his or her familiarity with non -er verb past participles ending in -u and a stem *pren-* on the basis of his or her familiarity with forms such as the imperative 2nd pl. *Pren-ez!* or the present tense 2nd pl. *vous pren-ez*. *Moru* is in every respect similar to *moré* except for its analogical source (i.e., non -er vs. -er verb past participles). As for *dormu*, this error would seem to suggest the affixation not of -u, but of -nu, to the stem *dor-*. This explanation is not implausible when one considers that the past participles of some frequent non -er verbs like *venir* and *revenir* end in the syllable *nu*.[24] Explanations resting on analogy operating at a morphemic level are also possible for the analogical participles ending in -i. Using *reveni* as an illustration, one can suppose that the students who committed this error isolated an -i ending on the basis of their familiarity with non -er verb past participles endind in -i, and that they isolated the stem *reven-* on the basis of their familiarity with present tense *vous reven-ez* or imperative *Reven-ez!*, for instance. Recall, however, that -i is not a past participle inflection according to Martinet (1969). Martinet analyzes -i as part of the verb stem, which leads him, as we saw, to postulate a -Ø inflection instead (e.g., parti-Ø; sorti-Ø; etc.). The question, then, is whether *reveni* is also compatible with Martinet's -Ø inflection analysis. It would appear to be for there seems to be at least one verb form on the basis of which the students could isolate the stem *reveni-*, that is, the infinitive (i.e., reveni-r). Likewise, the erroneous past participles *li* and *ouvri* can be analyzed as *li-Ø* and *ouvri-Ø* since *li-* and *ouvri-*--are not only stems of the infinitive (i.e., li-re and ouvri-r) but of the future as well (e.g., je li-rai; j'ouvri-rai), not to mention that *li-* is also a stem of the present (e.g., je lis-Ø). While *reveni*, *ouvri* and *li* are suggestive of an analogical process operating at the morphemic level, alternatively these erroneous past participles ending in -i are compatible with an explanation resting on analogy operating at a word level. Conceivably the students who produced the participles *reveni*, *li*, and *ouvri*

did so as a result of what is known as proportional analogy (see de Saussure 1972:222, 226, 228). In this case the proportional analogy would be based on the infinitive, i.e., *partir:parti*, *finir:fini*, *sortir:sorti*, *dire:dit*, etc., therefore *revenir:reveni*, *lire:li*, *ouvrir:ouvri*.

The discussion above has shown that the immersion students evidence the capacity to produce past participles by relying on morphological analogy (i.e,, by isolating and combining stems and endings), on rhyming analogy or on proportional analogy. It has shown further that when morphological analogy is (possibly) being resorted to, the endings selected by the learners need not correspond to those posited by Martinet (i.e., -i instead of -Ø as in *reven-i* and-*nu* instead of -u as in *dor-nu*). In conclusion, the analogical past participle errors committed by the immersion students unfortunately do not provide compelling evidence either in favor of or against Martinet's morphological description of French past participles. Following the example of Derwing and Baker (1977), one could perhaps design an ingenious experiment that would stand a better chance of settling the issue at stake here.

4.5 CONCLUSION

That the immersion students are still making past participle errors in grade 6 means that after close to seven years of schooling in French they have not yet reached a level of grammatical proficiency comparable to that of grade 2 native learners of French. Spilka (1976) arrived at similar findings as regards other aspects of the grammatical proficiency of early French immersion students. One explanation for this, of course, is that the immersion schools provide lower levels of exposure to French and fewer opportunities for use of French than the natural acquisition setting in which the native speakers learn their language from infancy. I would like to point out, however, that while these findings are an indication that immersion programs fail to foster native-like grammatical proficiency, a recently completed study by Lepicq (1980) reports that the sentences in which she inserted errors committed by early French immersion students (especially morphological) were rated rather high by native judges on a scale of acceptability and intelligibility. Lepicq's findings therefore suggest that the immersion students' interlanguage, albeit deviant with

respect to the target language, may nonetheless be quite appropriate for the important purpose of communicating with native speakers of French. The communicative suitability of immersion French is perhaps a question which should be addressed more fully in future immersion research. Genesee (1979:28) also believes that this remains an important unanswered question concerning the productive French language skills of the immersion students.

5. GENERAL CONCLUSION

A semantic distinction was established between the bare (BI) and the *pour* (PI) infinitives of motion verbs where traditionally they had been considered equivalent. This rendered it possible to argue that the bilingual speakers (i.e., the Franco-Ontarian and the French immersion students) were inserting a semantically empty *pour* before the BI of motion verbs. A semantic distinction was also established between general and specific verbs of motion and it was shown that the use of the PI with the former is conditional upon the presence of an intervening locative complement in Standard French. It was seen that the insertion of *pour* before the BI of motion verbs is predictable on the basis of a structural contrast between French and English but that at the same time it is explainable as a case of purely intrasystemic syntactic regularization. Proof of the validity of the intrasystemic explanation was shown to require further research on child language acquisition of French. Proof of the validity of the intersystemic explanation was shown to necessitate further research on the acquisition of French as a second language by learners whose mother tongue does not require an equivalent of *pour* in BI constructions. It was noted that this research might end up supporting both intrasystemic regularization and English interference (i.e., a dual origin error). The French immersion students were seen to have a higher rate of *pour* insertion than the Franco-Ontarian students, who have a higher rate than the monolingual Québécois students (the latter, in fact, never inserted *pour* before the BI of motion verbs). Differences in each student group's degree of exposure to and use of French were claimed to be responsible for the differences in rates of *pour* insertion.

Turning to the reflexive pronoun study, it was hypothesized and confirmed that the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun would vary as a function of the pronominal verb. Reflexive pronoun omission, it was argued, is interpretable as a case of purely intrasystemic morphological regularization but also as a case of English interference. This again raised the possibility that reflexive pronoun omission is a dual origin error. The attestation of a developmental stage of reflexive pronoun omission in the literature on child language acquisition of French was provided as proof that English interference is not a necessary underlying cause. In any case, invoking English

interference was not helpful in accounting for the verb by verb variation in the rate of omission of the reflexive pronoun. Explanations of this variation were sought in terms of certain linguistic properties of the pronominal verbs, such as whether they have nonpronominal counterparts, whether reflexive pronoun omission results in formal ambiguity, etc. The Québécois students hardly ever omitted the reflexive pronoun but the Franco-Ontarian students did so frequently and the French immersion students even more frequently. These intergroup differences were again attributed to differences in degree of exposure to and use of French. Both the Franco-Ontarian and French immersion students were seen to make progress in acquiring the reflexive pronoun between grades 2 and 5, although their acquisition was still far from complete. The Québécois students, on the other hand, had already all but mastered the use of the reflexive pronoun by grade 2. When the Franco-Ontarian students' dominant language of communication was taken into consideration in addition to their grade level or age, it was found that the French-dominant speakers were not far from having achieved complete mastery of the reflexive pronoun in grade 5 whereas the English-dominant speakers lagged considerably behind.

Finally, in the past participle study a description (borrowed from Martinet 1969) highlighting the complex morphology of past participles in French served as the basis for making the prediction that the learners would experience difficulties forming correct past participles, especially those of the non -er verbs. A detailed analysis of the oral French production of the French immersion students confirmed these predictions. On the basis of the errors committed by these students, an attempt was made to test the 'psychological reality' of Martinet's description of the morphology of past participles in French, but this attempt proved inconclusive. Unlike *pour* insertion and reflexive pronoun omission, past participle malformation was only compatible with explanations of an intrasystemic nature, some errors having been produced on the analogy of the morphology of other past participles (especially those of the -er verbs),others representing overgeneralizations of previously learned verb forms (especially the infinitive). The younger students relied more on overgeneralization whereas the older students relied more on analogy a finding which was explained in terms of the older students' greater

linguistic maturity. In the light of the finding that the rate of acquisition of the reflexive pronoun is determined by the pronominal verb, it was hypothesized that the rate of acquisition of the past participle might also vary as a function of the verb. This hypothesis was confirmed on the basis on an examination of the non -er verb past participle forms produced by the French immersion students. Two linguistic properties of the past participles were suggested as possible determinants of some of the observed variation, but it was concluded that there were certainly other pertinent properties yet to be discovered. In contrast to the Québécois students, who had already completed their acquisition of the past participles by grade 2, the immersion students still experienced difficulties with the past participles of non -er verbs in grade 6. A cursory examination of the Franco-Ontarian students' acquisition of the past participles suggested that these students lagged behind the Québécois students but were ahead of the French immersion students. Differences in degree of exposure to and use of French were once again invoked as the factor responsible for the intergroup differences in speed of acquisition of the past participles.

The existence of verb by verb variation as concerns both the acquisition of the reflexive pronoun and the past participle suggests that the acquisition of the BI of motion verbs might also proceed at a different pace depending on certain linguistic properties of the individual motion verbs. For example, because the general motion verb *aller* is by far the most frequent of the motion verbs (and in fact one of the most frequent verbs of the French language), one might suspect that the BI is acquired faster with *aller* than with the less frequent motion verbs (other factors being equal). This is a question which could be addressed in future research. Still on the topic of linguistic variation, as Wode et al. (1978) have indicated, among the different aspects of the process of second language acquisition which have been examined in the literature, two stand as it were in complementary distribution. On the one hand, researchers have looked at the acquisition of *several* morphemes with a view to determine the order in which they are acquired. On the other, researchers have looked for developmental stages in the acquisition of *one* morpheme, as was done in each one of the acquisition studies featured in this thesis. Several criticisms have been leveled at the morpheme

order studies (see Wode et al. 1978 and Fathman 1979 for a review). This thesis would seem to provide a new type of criticism seemingly vitiating the very idea of ordering morphemes. Central to the criticism is the existence of linguistic variation in the acquisition of a given morpheme such as the reflexive pronoun or one of the reflexes of the past participle inflection. As a consequence of linguistic variation, a given morpheme can be acquired earlier *or* later than another depending on the linguistic contexts in which they appear. To give an illustration of this, we saw that the -u reflex of the past participle inflection is still not acquired in grade 6 by the French immersion students with the verb *lire* while the reflexive pronoun of *s'appeler* is already acquired in grade 2 by the same students. Conversely, we saw that the -u reflex of the past participle inflection is already acquired in grade 2 by the French immersion students with the verb *voir* whereas the reflexive pronoun of the majority of the pronominal verbs examined is still not acquired in grade 6 by the same students. I would therefore suggest that researchers concentrate on discovering the internal variation that may exist in the acquisition of one and the same morpheme as a prerequisite to the meaningful comparison of the order of acquisition of different morphemes.

Pour insertion and reflexive pronoun omission are what I have called 'dual origin' errors in that they are attributable in theory to both intra- and intersystemic factors. Researchers investigating second language acquisition or bilingualism more generally have been divided as to what to make of such errors. The vast majority would seem to adhere to the perspective that such errors have a single origin, intrasystemic *or* intersystemic, and that it is probably impossible to establish with certainty which one of the two is at the root of a given 'dual origin' error. On the other hand, a small but growing minority of researchers have taken dual origin errors as evidence that the majority position is perhaps too simplistic. These researchers have speculated that dual origin errors could be the result of intra- *and* intersystemic factors operating conjointly. Politzer and Ramirez (1973) were perhaps the first to suggest this new perspective and other reserachers have since followed suit (among these, Swain 1976, Schachter and Celce-Murcia 1977 and Canale, Mougeon and Bélanger 1979). An empirical way of deciding the issue must be sought and a first suggestion along these lines was made by Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977). They

advanced the hypothesis that if dual origin errors really reflect intra- and intersystemic factors operating conjointly, these errors should "be more persistent and difficult to overcome" than single origin errors (for preliminary evidence in support of this hypothesis, see Beniak and Mougeon 1981b). A suggestion of a different type was made in this thesis, according to which the participation of intrasystemic factors is supported if it can be shown that monolingual natives commit the same error, and the participation of intersystemic factors if second language learners with another mother tongue are shown to commit a similar error that cannot however be explained intrasystemically.

In closing, from the finding that at or near the end of their elementary schooling the Franco-Ontarian and French immersion students have yet to complete their acquisition of the three aspects of the French verb system that were under study, one may conclude that elementary French language schools in Ontario's francophone minority localities and the early French immersion programs are not capable of guaranteeing successful mastery of the French language by the students they cater to. Perhaps such a finding should be a forewarning to those Franco-Ontarian parents residing in minority francophone localities who would leave it to the French language school to transmit the French language to their children (see introduction). It should perhaps also serve as an indication to those anglophone parents who wish their children to develop native-like productive skills in French that sending their children to a French language school would probably constitute a better alternative than sending them to an English language school offering a French immersion program (where, of course, such an alternative is available to them, as in Montreal for instance).

NOTES

1. Very recently, however, there has appeared at least one study whose findings are partly at variance with these positive results. McInnis and Donohue (1980) found that general achievement scores measured by tests administered in English were significantly lower for early French immersion students than for intensive French students acting as controls. They concluded that "the immersion program results is an improvement in skills in French but does so at the expense of some loss of skills in English". (p. 327)

2. In this census as well as in the other to be referred to later, mother tongue was defined as the first language learned and still understood.

3. The census information presented here is taken from Mougeon et al.(1980).

4. The 1971 census figures to be cited are drawn from D'Costa (1975).

5. It is also possible to calculate the rate of abandonment of French at home among Ontarians of French mother tongue, who numbered 482, 345 in 1971. So calculated the rate stands at 37%.

6. See, among others, the studies of Dorian (1978) on East Sutherland Gaelic, a dying Scottish Gaelic dialect, of Gal (1979) on language shift in a bilingual Hungarian-German Austrian town, and of Mougeon et al. (1980) on Ontarian French.

7. I would like to express my thanks to Fred Genesee, formerly with the PSBGM and now Assistant Professor of Psychology at McGill University, for obtaining for me the permission to carry out these tape-recorded interviews.

8. I would like to express my thanks to the directors of the Petit Collège and the Moyen Collège for allowing me to conduct these tape-recorded interviews.

9. The reader is advised that none of the upcoming acquisition studies is based on the totality of the three corpora nor does any of the acquisition studies take into consideration the students' sex or social class.

10. It should be pointed out that causal constructions are also used in answer to the question *pourquoi*, as is illustrated by the following examples:

(i) a. Pourquoi Marie s'est-elle mariée ?
b. Pour avoir des enfants. (purpose)
c. Parce qu'elle veut des enfants. (cause)

11. The capacity to take a following BI would seem to be a distinguishing characteristic of 'true' motion verbs in French. Thus there are other verbs in French which possess the semantic feature of motion (e.g., *ramper*, *marcher*, *nager*, *voler*, *s'avancer*, *s'élancer*, *s'approcher*, etc.) but whose use with a following BI is at best of dubious acceptability:

(ii) a. ?Le bébé rampe chercher son jouet.
b. ?Il s'avança leur serrer la main.
c. ?Le voltigeur s'est élancé attraper la chandelle.

12. Another task would be to check whether learners of French whose mother tongue is not English but a language that does not require an equivalent of *pour* in BI constructions also overgeneralize the use of *pour*. One could look, for example, at the spoken French of young Spanish learners. As we shall see in the conclusion to this study, in Spanish the equivalent of the BI is introduced by the preposition *a* and the equivalent of the PI is introduced by the preposition *para*. If the Spanish learners were to overgeneralize *pour*, they could only be doing so on the basis of the internal properties of French adduced earlier (barring the possibility that they commit the equivalent overgeneralization in their mother tongue, i.e., substitution of *para* for *a*). If on the other hand the Spanish learners were to overgeneralize *a*, this would be evidence in support of interference from their mother tongue, which would suggest, by implication, that English interference is involved in the Franco-Ontarian students' overgeneralization of *pour*. Conceivably, the young Spaniards could overgeneralize both *à* and *pour*, which would mean that their learning of French is affected by both mother tongue interference and intralinguistic factors proper to French. Again, by implication, this would suggest that the Franco-Ontarian students' overgeneralization

of *pour* could be a dual origin error, i.e., the outcome of the combination of English interference *and factors internal* to French. The problem posed by errors which can be attributed to both L1 and L2 factors will be taken up again in the conclusion to the thesis.

13. Some of the uses of *à* were branded by the prescriptive grammarians of the 17th century, e.g., possessive *à* as in *la fête à ma mère* (Brunot and Bruneau 1969:379) but are still used today in spoken Canadian French (Bélanger et al. 1978; La Follette 1969) as well as in popular European French (Frei 1971; Guiraud 1973).

14. In this table as in the others to come, percentages of omission of the reflexive pronoun were calculated when there were at least three occurrences of the pronominal verb. Dashes (-) appearing in a table indicate that the pronominal verb was not used at all. Question marks (?) indicate that it was used once or twice.

15. The reason for my believing that *se laver + D.O.* is most probably not acquired by the French-dominant Franco-Ontarian students is that the reflexive pronoun was missing in the only two occurrences of this pronominal verb in grade 5.

16. While in actual fact Harley and Swain did not report errors of the type *ouvri* for *ouvert* in their article, this error type nonetheless did occur in their immersion corpus (Harley, personal communication).

17. On occasion the immersion students were able to self-correct as evidenced by the following four examples that I uncovered in their speech, e.g., *on a boit, bu; j'ai met, mis; j'ai met, j'ai mis; ils ont mettent, ils ont mis.*

18. It is true that the past participle of some very frequent non -er verbs (e.g., *faire, dire*) is homophonous with some present tense and imperative forms. However, this homophony is characteristic of only a few verbs in French and therefore it may not be sufficient to induce learners to rely as heavily on the overgeneralization of the present tense or imperative as on the overgeneralization of the infinitive in forming the past participles of non -er verbs.

19. The errors presented thus far add up to a total of 88 only. There were five other errors consisting in the use of *li* instead of *lu*. These five errors account for the remaining 5% of the 93 non -er verb past participle errors. The *li* errors are ambiguous in the sense that they may either be interpreted as overgeneralizations of the imperative sg. or present tense 1st, 2nd and 3rd sg. form of *lire* or as creations on the analogy of non -er verb past participles ending in -i. This is why I have had to treat them as a separate category even though they are not underlain by a different source of error.

20. Verb stems can be borrowed, however, as evidenced by my corpus as well as that of Harley and Swain (e.g., j'ai baké un gâteau). Unlike inflections, which are bound morphemes, verb stems are free morphemes and therefore transferable.

21. The five *li* for *lu* errors are excluded here because of the ambiguity concerning their underlying cause (see footnote 19).

22. Under the assumption of analogy, *moré* constitutes an interesting particular case in which the ending -é has been affixed to the stem /mor-/. Since this stem is only involved in the formation of the past participle of *mourir*, the error *moré*, paradoxically, implies knowledge of the past participle of *mourir*, i.e. *mort* /mor-Ø/. The adjunction of -é could be due to the learner's taking cognizance of the fact that nearly all past participles in French end in a vowel, especially in -é.

23. *Devré* is different from the other erroneous past participles ending in -é in that the previously acquired verb form of which it could be an overgeneralization is the future tense 1st sg. or 2nd pl. form.

24. If it were not for the fact that the error *dornu* was committed by more than one student, one could also have entertained the hypothesis that dornu is the result of the affixation of -u to an erroneous stem *dorn-* formed on the basis of a confusion of the nasals *m* and *n*.

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